



August 2021/Elul 5781

Dear Friends,

### It's Our Sacred Responsibility!

Before the arrival of the dreaded COVID-19 pandemic, many of us had been fortunate each year, to sit in our synagogues with our families on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, sharing the majesty of the moment, and praying together, beseeching the Al-mighty to grant us a year filled with blessings for us and for all our loved ones. It was all so regular and all so routine, that we often took these precious moments for granted. We pray, that in the coming year we will be able to begin to return to some level of normalcy, and more deeply appreciate those special times.

And as we pray during the coming High Holidays, we need to bear in mind that it's not just for our immediate family for whom we should be praying. After all, we are taught by our sages that we are each responsible for the well-being of all Jewish people. We are all guarantors for our brothers and sisters, wherever they may be.

Each morning, in the blessings of the Torah, we ask; *"Please God, sweeten the words of Your Torah in our mouths and the mouths of Your people."* For almost 34 years, with your generous and continuous support, NJOP has been at the forefront of promoting the sweetness of Jewish teachings, figuratively, dipping the apple of Jewish mindfulness into honey, impacting upon hundreds of thousands of Jews, across North America and in 44 countries around the world, many of whom had no previous connection with Jewish life, providing them with extraordinary learning opportunities and positive, joyous Jewish experiences.

In particular, during the past 18 months, during the challenging pandemic, NJOP has found many creative ways to engage Jews, not only in North America but also those around the globe who could not attend in-person programs. From the Philippines, to Mauritius, from Liberia to Australia, hundreds have already taken classes and hundreds more are registering for classes. The COVID-19 pandemic seems to have awakened many of our brothers and sisters, inspiring a deep desire within to connect more meaningfully to their inner Judaism. There seems to be, among many previously unengaged Jews, a profound yearning to connect to the sweetness, to learn to read Hebrew and make up for lost time, to comprehend the basic foundational tenets of Judaism and to connect the dots of Jewish history. Time and again, we receive follow-up requests from Hebrew Reading students asking, "When will the Hebrew Reading Crash Course Level II begin?" or "When will the Crash Course in Basic Judaism begin?"

Here is some extraordinary feedback from students in Connecticut and Japan who attended a Hebrew Reading Crash Course taught by Florence Wiener, NJOP's Hebrew Reading Specialist:

*This is an extraordinary course, and Florence is phenomenal! I only knew a few letters and a few prayer book words before this course, and now, I am able to read more words/ lines of my morning prayers in Hebrew... In fact, I was so elated, that I read the last line of this week's parsha (Torah portion) in Hebrew!! An amazing feeling!! Thank you Rabbi Buchwald, NJOP and Florence!!!!*

Leslie M., Avon, CT

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 Jewish Treats

 Jewish Treats

\*National Jewish Outreach Program  
is now NJOP.

*I went to Hebrew school and wanted to refresh what I learned, I want to be able to follow the services at synagogue... It's a wonderful class. I hope you will continue to offer classes... I enjoyed the classes tremendously. I especially like the singing.*  
Reba F. Chieba, Japan

We also received the following feedback from Leslie A. of Congregation Har Shalom in Potomac, MD that had offered a Hebrew Reading Crash Course Level I:

*Loved the class. We got through the first class before the pandemic. All summer and fall the students were asking to restart and continue. We did Level I in January, and all I kept hearing was "when are we doing Level II"? We started Level II after Passover which everyone loved so much that they have been meeting outside of class to practice.*

It's not just the Hebrew reading classes that are having a profound impact. Over 200 students registered for the Crash Course in Basic Judaism that I personally offered in the spring, and more than 75 students from across the USA attended each of the five sessions of the Crash Course in Jewish History. In addition, visits to NJOP's new website have soared, more than doubling, year over year.

Rather than rest on our laurels, NJOP recently upgraded its acclaimed Crash Course in Jewish History by adding a new PowerPoint presentation for each class of the five-part series to provide a critical tool for the instructor, and to enhance the overall student experience. Debuted during my recent presentation of the Crash Course, the slides shown on screen during the course were very well received, and we are confident that the availability of this critical teaching tool will inspire more rabbis and instructors to offer the program, whether in-person or via Zoom.

Over the years, NJOP's efforts have impacted hundreds of thousands of Jews around the world. Through the SHABBAT ACROSS AMERICA AND CANADA campaign, NJOP has brought the sweetness of the Shabbat experience to over **1.1 million** participants, and over **260,000** have learned to read Hebrew by participating in the READ HEBREW AMERICA AND CANADA Hebrew literacy campaign offered each fall. Throughout the years, NJOP's programs have enabled over 50,000 Jews across the spectrum, to celebrate the Jewish holidays of Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Chanukah, Purim and Passover at one of NJOP's acclaimed workshops and programs.

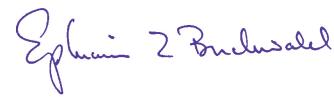
**!!!** You, our wonderful partners, have truly been the backbone of NJOP's remarkable achievements over the past 34 years. By enabling NJOP to share the sweetness of Jewish life and Jewish practice with thousands of our mostly-unaffiliated brothers and sisters, whether at in-person programs or those offered on Zoom, NJOP's daily *Jewish Treats* email, or providing inspiration on NJOP social media platforms such as @JewishTweets on Twitter, NJOP has made a difference. A real difference!

**!!!**

We look forward to a year of extraordinary growth and engagement on the part of the tens of thousands who will be touched by NJOP wherever they may be. With your dedicated and magnanimous support, we will, together, fulfill our sacred responsibility.

Wishing you a healthy and happy New Year. Shana Tova.

With best wishes,



Ephraim Z. Buchwald

PS: NJOP's success is truly your success. We are confident that as NJOP moves forward, you will be there for NJOP as you have been so generously over the past 34 years.