



THE CARDOZIAN

NEWSLETTER OF THE DAVID CARDOZO ACADEMY

Machon Ohr Aaron & Betsy Spijer

WINTER EDITION ■ 2010 ■ 5771

From the Dean's Desk

Dear Friends,

It is a pleasure to present our new e-newsletter. The David Cardozo Academy is motivated by my personal conviction that Judaism can again become the great love of the Jewish people. Humankind at large could benefit and be inspired by its strong religious and moral message, once our leadership and youth re-engage with genuine Judaism as conceived by Abraham, the first Jew, and developed through the ages by our prophets and sages.

Judaism needs to be rebuilt, and this can only occur if we are prepared to think out of the box. The David Cardozo Academy is therefore not a school in the conventional sense of the word, but an active and spiritual Jewish lab where new insights and opportunities are tested. All our programs, lectures, panels and activities are deeply geared to this task, aiming to facilitate a deeply moral and religious conscience in which people will take great pride and want to participate. There is no standstill in spiritual life. We either ascend or descend. There is an inner cosmos in Judaism, and we need to rediscover it. It will give birth to a new world, and Israel will once more be strong.

Nathan Lopes Cardozo
Nathan Lopes Cardozo

Professor Gellman Helps Search for God, Rabbanit Rosen Discusses Minorities in Israel at DCA 5771/2011 Jerusalem Lecture Series

The DCA's Jerusalem Lecture Series continues to offer the Jerusalem community opportunities to explore subjects that are integral to the Cardozian philosophy. Talking about God and about one's personal relationship with Him is often neglected, or even taboo, in most religious circles. Philosophy Professor Yehudah Gellman of Ben Gurion University (retired) brought God back into view. In his lecture, *The Hiding of the Hiding of God's Face: Illusion, Estrangement, and Self-Delusion in Early Hasidism*, he analyzed early Hasidic sources delineating three ways in which God is hidden from us, and then shared the relevance of the three approaches for modern religious life.



Rabbanit Gilla Rosen presents at the DCA Jerusalem Lecture Series

Respect for all human beings, created in the image of God, is a basic tenet of Judaism. But how does that play out in our personal day-to-day interactions with non-Jews, or in Israel's political arena? Rabbanit Gilla Rosen of Yakar explored this challenge in her lecture, *Minorities and Minority Culture in Israel: a Religious Approach*. Her remarks struck a timely chord as Israel, grappling with its majority role over other ethnic and religious groups living in its borders, now deals with the controversy surrounding statements from some Jewish religious circles banning the rental and sale of property to non-Jews. Rabbanit Rosen made the case for Orthodoxy as part of a possible solution, and not as part of the problem.

Rabbi Cardozo and Rabbi Zvi Grumet will present in the upcoming Jerusalem Lecture Series.

2010 IS ALMOST GONE, BUT THERE'S STILL TIME TO DONATE! THE DCA GREATLY DEPENDS ON YOUR SUPPORT!

Over 1,000 Israelis in Tel Aviv Connect to Jewish Roots, Attend DCA's Ramat Aviv Community High Holiday Programs

There was not a dry eye as the crowd chanted the concluding choruses, and then spontaneously sang Hatikvah. The venue was not Tel Aviv's *Yad Eliyahu* Sports Arena, a Mecca resplendent with divine supplication. It wasn't a typical synagogue, either. Rather, a community center in the hub of secular Israel, at the close of Yom Kippur. They came in shorts. Some came with BlackBerrys. They brought their kids. Over 1,000 people in all, looking to connect with Judaism, and even God. They came because they were welcomed as partners in Jewish life.

For three years now, the DCA has been engaging the Ramat Aviv Community. Unfortunately, most Jewish identity programs see their audience as recipients, and not as equal partners in Judaism. The DCA approach is to engender self ownership of Judaism. The Ramat Aviv Community continues to celebrate Jewish holidays and lifecycle events, actively participating in this year's DCA Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur and Sukkot programs, run in cooperation with other local organizations.



Ramat Aviv Community Sukkah



2010/11 Cardozo-Kagan JLP Class

Cardozo-Kagan Jewish Leadership Program at IDC, Herzliya Kicks Off Second Year, Following Successful 2009 Start

Being Jewish is no longer a source of inspiration or pride for many of Israel's youth. Judaism simply does not capture their interest. Even worse, unpleasant interactions with established religion have turned many away.

The Cardozo-Kagan Jewish Leadership Program, launched in 2009, continues to confront this Jewish identity crisis among Israel's young generation. Now in its second year at the Interdisciplinary Center in Herzliya - one of Israel's leading universities and home of the annual Herzliya Conference - and operating in partnership with the campus Hillel, the program exposes 25 select students from over 300 applicants to a more relevant Judaism. It also offers periodic lectures, panels and activities to the greater campus community. Director **Chanan Atlas** continues to add new and innovative elements to the program each year.

Only a few weeks into the program, Brazilian born **Hadassa Getsztain**, who immigrated at age 9 and served as a commander with honors in Israel's Navy, already senses a change in her Jewishness. "The Cardozo-Kagan Jewish Leadership Program is providing me with the tools to fully define my views and shape my Jewish identity," said Hadassa, a third year student of government majoring in business and communications. "I want to show others that it is a privilege to be Jewish, and that the Jewish State of Israel cannot be taken for granted."



The IDC Campus, Herzliya. Credit: Sharon Bentov

"All of us appreciate the interesting syllabus and unconventional approach you have used in providing an enriching program to students at IDC Herzliya... Your open-minded and tolerant way of approaching these subjects has a strong impact on the students...I am sure this will influence them...as they become top professionals in the State of Israel. The values which you instill in students during their university studies are critical in helping shape their lives; it is a shot in the arm to these youngsters, to the State of Israel, and to the Jewish people..."

Jonathan Davis, Vice President for External Relations, IDC Herzliya; Head of the Raphael Recanati International School

The program's opening sessions immediately exposed the students to a Judaism influenced by Rabbi Cardozo's philosophies, far different from the one they thought they recognized. First, **Michael Kagan**, benefactor of the program, shared both his personal narrative of having grown up with little Jewish identification and his desire to assure today's youth that they can explore and define their Jewishness - something he was unable to do until much later in life. Rabbi Cardozo then shared his personal story of an assimilated Dutch Jew who found his way back to Judaism, ironically, thanks to philosopher Baruch Spinoza who was arguably the first and most famous secular Jew in history.

At a later seminar Rabbi Professor **Naftali Rothenberg**, Chair of Jewish Culture and Identity at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, explored the more open approach to love and romance in medieval Jewish sources, including excerpts from a romantic novel written by Don Yehuda Abarbanel.



Student **Ohad Kogeman** felt he connected to Hanukkah for the first time, at the most recent session with attorney Dr. **Prina Neuwirth**. A lecturer on Jewish topics, Dr. Neuwirth reframed the Hanukkah story into a relevant debate on whether the holy (religion) and the mundane (popular culture) must be kept apart, as the Greeks believed, or whether the two are inseparable, as Judaism posits. "I finally see the relevance of Hanukkah to me," commented Ohad. "I now feel it is something that is happening to me today, something we all struggle with now. It's about all of us."

Keep Your Thinking Cap On!

Under the guidance of Rabbi Cardozo, the DCA's Jerusalem Think Tank (TT), a forum of Jewish thinkers, educators and leaders, continues to explore every possible Jewish topic under the sun. Think Tank Fellows present issues from their own lives - matters they struggle with every day - with the hope that exploring uncharted realms of Judaism in these challenging sessions will further invigorate authentic religious living.

"For me, the Think Tank is a source of joy, revelation and comfort," commented Yael Valier, a Think Tank Fellow. "I've discovered that traditional Judaism is broader than it is as presented in other forums, and that it is robust enough to tolerate - and even be enriched by - many different points of view about God, Halacha and other religious philosophies."

This year's Think Tank began with a (brain) storm as the Fellows, which include five newcomers, engaged in discussion about what they believed to be the critical religious issues confronting them and today's religious community. Here is a sampling of issues suggested: the role of leisure culture in Judaism; balancing career, study and family in the Jewish tradition; Is autonomy a value within Judaism?; "The Chosen People" - a veneer for racism? Chauvinist nationalism?

The second TT session was a real treat; Rabbi Cardozo's first presentation to the Fellows this year. His topic, the Future of Halacha, was sure to stir up much discussion. "The beauty of Halacha is that it makes a problem out of every solution; it complicates life for the sake of being constantly aware of the presence of God," noted Rabbi Cardozo. "Only when a matter becomes an 'issue' do we take notice and give it its deserved attention. Even the most trivial deed or thought is highly



significant in the divine realm."

Rabbi Cardozo's comments on the question of when to be lenient or strict also caused fierce debate. "On one hand the desire to be lenient to make Judaism more appealing, and on the other hand the hyper-codification of Halacha, both misrepresent Halacha's role. In both approaches God is either left out of the picture, or forgotten amid the overabundant details. The future of Halacha will depend on rectifying this problem. God must be at the center of its concern."

Rabbi Cardozo's presentations are a fundamental component to the DCA Think Tank, the "Halacha Lab," whereby new methods of engagement with Halacha will be tested under the critical eye of the Think Tank Fellows before exposure to a broader audience. Throughout the year others will be invited to respond to Rabbi Cardozo's philosophy and present their own subjects of interest.

DCA Dean & Executive Director Spread Academy's Message on November USA Lecture and Fundraising Trip

DCA Founder and Dean Rabbi Dr. **Nathan Lopes Cardozo**, along with DCA Executive Director **Daniel Sheer**, racked up air miles on a recent trip to New York and Los Angeles. (The flights provided much material for Rabbi Cardozo's *Thoughts on Ponder*; see TTP #261, *Word Painting, US Customs and God's Desserts*, DCA website).

In addition to meetings with local Rabbis, Knesset Member Rabbi Chaim Amsalem and other American community leaders, Rabbi Cardozo served as Scholar in Residence and Guest Speaker in New York City at the

Sephardic Institute, Beth Torah, Gateways/RAJE and Congregation Shearith Israel, and in Los Angeles at the West Coast Torah Center and Beth Jacob Congregation (Irvine).

Rabbi Cardozo's lectures included:

- The Torah, The Impossible Text of Holiness;*
- The Unfrozen Torah: Thoughts on the Future of Halacha;*
- Are God and the Torah Righteous?; New Thoughts on the Justice of God and the Morality of the Torah;*
- Jewish Education and Inspiration;*
- The Future of Israel and Rabbinical Courage;*
- The Contemporary Jew, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the Ark of Noah.*

People of the Book: Upcoming DCA Publications

The DCA's philosophies are firmly embedded in its programs. The Academy also places a high priority on spreading its mission through ongoing articles, essays and publications, serving as a virtual community for those struggling with the same issues, and acting as a catalyst for discussion, debate and innovative thinking. Current projects in the making include a documentary film on Rabbi Cardozo's life history and philosophy; a new book, *Conversations with Rabbi Cardozo* (est. 2012); translations into Hebrew of DCA books and Rabbi Cardozo's weekly *Thoughts on Ponder*; and the publication of the DCA Faculty Anthology.

Remember the DCA in Your 2010 Year-End Tax Planning!

As 2010 comes to a close, it's a wonderful opportunity to make a gift to the David Cardozo Academy. Help us continue our vital programs, and take advantage of the tax benefit. To explore possibilities to meet your philanthropic goals, please email Daniel Sheer at daniel@cardozoacademy.com. Here are some current projects greatly requiring your support:

Cardozo-Kagan Jewish Leadership Program at the Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya

- One Year Activity \$200,000
- Sponsor a Leadership Student \$5,000

Ramat Aviv Community

- One Year of Activity \$90,000
- High Holidays & Sukkot Programming \$8,000

General and Programmatic

- Think Tank Fellows (15 fellows) \$15,000
- DCA Faculty Anthology (numerous dedication opportunities) \$15,000
- Lecture Series \$7,000

7 Cassuto Street, Jerusalem, 96433 Israel

T: +972.2.642.7272 • F: +972.2.642.6076 • E: cacademy@012.net.il www.cardozoschool.org