

# CLAL UPDATE - Spring 2008



CLAL

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## CLAL - The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership

- ❖ Stimulates volunteer, professional and rabbinic leadership to build responsive Jewish communities across America.
- ❖ Helps individuals to imagine new Jewish possibilities.
- ❖ Promotes inclusive Jewish communities in which all voices are heard.
- ❖ Develops insights from Jewish wisdom for the American public square.
- ❖ Enhances Jewish participation in American civic and spiritual life.

Dear Friends,

These past months have been an exciting time at CLAL. Under the helm of CLAL's new Board Chairman, Larry Gellman, CLAL continues to reach out and remain cutting-edge, bringing Jewish wisdom to the larger public arena.

Rabbi Brad Hirschfield's new book, *You Don't Have To Be Wrong For Me To Be Right: Finding Faith Without Fanaticism* (Harmony, 2008) now in its second printing, has touched audiences throughout the country. Visiting more than 35 cities, with public appearances throughout, he has teamed up with many of the country's leading religious figures, building relationships and laying foundations for new dialogue and understanding.

Rabbi Irwin Kula and his award-winning book, *Yearnings: Embracing the Sacred Messiness of Life*, now in paperback, continues to be in great demand, with invitations coming from as far off as Bhutan for spiritual insights and Jewish wisdom. Recognized as a leader for pluralism, he was invited by the U.S. Army to speak at its annual training for religious educators.

*How to Spot One of Us*, a moving selection of poetry by CLAL Teaching Fellow Janet R. Kirchheimer, found new audiences with practitioners who work with Holocaust survivors. In demand as a speaker, her poetry was published in a variety of Jewish newspapers for *Yom HaShoah*, and was read at Camp Victory in Baghdad as part of a Days of Remembrance memorial service by the Multi National Forces in Iraq.

For the second year, CLAL faculty were named in the "Top 50 Influential Rabbis in America," listed in *Newsweek*. Both Rabbis Kula and Hirschfield, along with CLAL Senior Associate Rabbi Joseph Telushkin, were selected. Appearing in the "Top 25 Pulpit Rabbis in America" were also a number of past participants from CLAL programs.

Along with these programs, the CLAL faculty continues to travel all over the country, providing courses, lectures and training to communities everywhere. Our Rabbinic Internship, under the direction of Rabbi Tsvi Blanchard, Ph.D., remains one of the stellar training programs in the country. And you, through your support, enable all of this to happen. Your participation is the critical link that brings this work together. Thank you for your vision, contribution, and vote of confidence.

*B'Shalom,*

Larry Gellman  
Chairman

Irwin Kula  
President

Brad Hirschfield  
President

Donna M. Rosenthal  
Executive Vice Chairman

## CLAL APPOINTS NEW CHAIRMAN

Jewish leader Larry Gellman from Tucson, Arizona was named the new Chairman of the Board of Directors of CLAL-The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership. He succeeds Fern K. Hurst as Chair of the organization.

Mr. Gellman is the Managing Director for Private Wealth Management at Robert W. Baird & Co. A long time CLAL Board Member, Associate Chair, and National Development Chairman from 1988-2007, he brings his substantial expertise, guidance and dedication to the 34 year-old organization. Leadership positions he has held include the Milwaukee Jewish Federation, Wisconsin's State of Israel Bonds, the United Way of Milwaukee, the Jewish Federation of Arizona, the Big Brothers and Sisters of Tucson, Tucson Hebrew Academy, and many others.

“CLAL has always been on the cutting edge of Jewish education and we were among the first to actively promote a more pluralistic approach to community life,” said Mr. Gellman. “Today, more and more people of all backgrounds are looking to Jewish wisdom and insights to help them sort out the most significant decisions in their lives. What an honor and privilege it is for me to be the Board Chairman at this very exciting time in CLAL’s history.”

## ***YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE WRONG FOR ME TO BE RIGHT: FINDING FAITH WITHOUT FANATICISM***

Published in January 2008, this powerful book by Rabbi Brad Hirschfield explores how we can honor our own traditions while remaining connected to the wider world. Part memoir, part self help, part current affairs, the book addresses the critical questions animating our world: Can we create a world with less violence and division? Can we make room for other faiths without negating our own? Can we find a way to balance openness with commitment?

Visiting more than 35 cities, Rabbi Hirschfield has met with scores of community and interfaith leaders and spoken at events nationwide. Highlights have included meeting with the leading bishop and imam in Rochester, NY for a panel on interfaith relations before an audience of hundreds, which was televised by the local NBC affiliate. In Washington, D.C., Rabbi Hirschfield was interviewed by a local imam at the renowned bookstore, the Busboys and Poets cafe. The event, which took place before a packed room, was taped for a segment by Bridges TV—American Muslim TV Network. In Dallas, TX, he spoke at an event jointly sponsored by Southern Methodist University, and the local JCRC. More than 400 people of all faiths attended, which has sparked a relationship between CLAL and the Perkins School of Theology. At the University of Oklahoma in Norman, hundreds gathered for a program sponsored by the Department of Religious Studies. The event is the next step in CLAL’s ongoing relationship with this public university, bringing Jewish wisdom to public education. And in Tucson, AZ, Rabbi Hirschfield and Rabbi Irwin Kula created a special forum on faith in America, moderated by the Director of Jewish Studies of the University of Arizona.

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In addition to his many appearances, Rabbi Hirschfield received extensive media coverage on his tour. From the *Dallas Morning News* to Reuters News Service; Chicago Public Radio to *The Dennis Miller Show*, he was featured in virtually every city he visited. For a current schedule, go to his website, [www.bradhirschfield.com](http://www.bradhirschfield.com).

## CLAL LISTED IN NEWSWEEK FOR 2ND YEAR – “TOP 50 INFLUENTIAL RABBIS IN AMERICA”

Naming the top 50 most influential rabbis in America, *Newsweek* listed a virtual “Who’s Who” in its Periscope section in April. Rabbi Irwin Kula was ranked no. 7, Rabbi Brad Hirschfield, no. 39, and CLAL Senior Associate Rabbi Joseph Telushkin, no. 21. A complete list is available at: <http://www.newsweek.com/id/131600>.

In addition, a list was created for the “Top 25 Pulpit Rabbis in America.” Of the 25, CLAL is proud to note that many of the rabbis listed were participants in CLAL programs throughout the years. They include: Jack Moline, Yosef Kanefsky, Brant Rosen, Asher Lopatin, David Stern, Amy Schwartzman, Terry Bookman, Mordechai Finley, Janet Marder, Rick Block, and Ed Feinstein. (For a complete list, check: <http://www.newsweek.com/id/131598?tid=relatedcl>.)

We congratulate all of those on the list. It is through their leadership and innovation that we can build a brighter, more dynamic American Jewish future.

## HIRSCHFIELD AND KULA: CLAL ON THE RADIO

Offering a fresh “take” on today’s news, *Hirschfield and Kula* bring listeners to a new place, uncovering the truths buried deep in the headlines. Never pigeonholing from left to right, it probes the issues in an informed, engaged and thought-provoking way. From the election, to the environment, to healthcare, to education, *Hirschfield and Kula* goes beyond the expected. To listen, go to [www.intelligenttalkradio.com](http://www.intelligenttalkradio.com).

## BUILDING SPIRITUAL CAPITAL

### *American Pilgrimage*

Airing this summer, *American Pilgrimage*, a groundbreaking new TV series conceived by and featuring Rabbi Brad Hirschfield for Bridges TV-America Muslim TV Network, takes viewers into the sites of leading imams from across North America. Going on the road with Rabbi Hirschfield, the series provides in-depth explorations of the most complex issues with which we grapple as Americans, Muslims, and Jews.

Offering a kind of “Charlie Rose meets Charles Kuralt” format, the series promises genuine insight and honest encounter that is both hard-hitting and deeply respectful. Moreover, it presents something very different – a rabbi interviewing imams at their locations for bridge building. The imams represent a cross section of the Muslim faith, as well as the Bridges audience. Visiting such cities as Halifax, Detroit, San



CLAL IN “TOP 50 INFLUENTIAL  
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Francisco, Washington, D.C., and New York, where there are large Muslim populations and some of the best known imams, the program captures the essence of each place. According to Mo Hassan and Aasiya Zubair, the founders of Bridges TV, the series has the potential to reach their widest audience yet, going beyond the Muslim community to anyone interested in discourse as a path towards greater understanding

“We are very excited about this landmark series allowing me to go one-on-one with some of the nation’s leading Islamic leaders on some of the key issues on the American and global religious landscapes,” said Rabbi Hirschfield, “especially those issues which are important to the future of the Jewish community and the State of Israel.”

### ***Building Bridges* Season II Available as 3-DVD Set**

A landmark TV series also created by and featuring Rabbi Hirschfield for Bridges TV, *Building Bridges: Abrahamic Perspectives on the World Today* (Season II) is now available as a 3-DVD set. Bringing together religious leaders from the major faiths to struggle with the issues spitting our communities and country, the series looks at where we are similar, where we are different, and how to build a new level of understanding in a time of suspicion and uncertainty.

Presenting all 15 episodes, the 3-DVD set covers such timely topics as the health care crisis, education and our schools, religion and the environment, and many other issues in the news. With interviews from the “man on the street,” the series offers viewers a new way to look at how people of faith see themselves, the world, and each other.

To order *Building Bridges*, Season II, the most popular series on the network, please contact CLAL at 212-779-3300, x 129, or go to CLAL’s online store at [www.clal.org](http://www.clal.org). The price, including shipping and postage, is \$25.

## **CLAL HERE AND ABROAD**

### **U.S. Army Calls on CLAL**

In January, Directors of Education from military installations across the country gathered in Orlando, Florida for the Chief of Chaplains Annual Religious Education Training Conference. This year for the first time ever a rabbi, Irwin Kula, was invited as the keynote speaker to address the more than 75 religious educators, none of whom are Jewish. Recognizing CLAL as a central address for pluralism, Rabbi Kula was asked to help the non-Jewish religious educators use their resources in a more pluralist fashion. The educators are charged with supporting people of all faiths, and helping the families of our armed forces in their spiritual formation.

In his remarks, Rabbi Kula looked at how the armed forces can help people support their individual commitments while remaining engaged in the wider world, and how a single wisdom tradition can be translated into a usable idiom for all. “The military is one of our most diverse institutions,” said Rabbi Kula. “It is on the cutting edge, wrestling with how to create a community with all different types of people. It provides

a model for the society-at-large, and offers a great example of pluralism, with everyone bringing their own customs, cultures and traditions to a uniform institution.” A screening of his film, *Time for a New God*, was also held.

### **CLAL Joins with Founder Rabbi Irving Greenberg on Two Key Projects**

Rabbi Irving “Yitz” Greenberg, CLAL founder and President Emeritus, stepped down as President of Jewish Life Network in July 2007. Since then, CLAL has been administering and facilitating two of his long awaited projects. The first is a book, tentatively titled *At the Beginning of a New Era in Jewish History* (Jewish Publication Society, forthcoming). The volume explores the historical and religious transformation of Jewish religion and culture under the impact of modernity, the Holocaust, and the creation of the State of Israel. The treatment builds on his Third Era ideas, which were developed and taught at CLAL. The book is intended to serve as an introduction to his larger work on Judaism as a religion of the primacy and sanctity of life. Secretarial and administrative support is being underwritten by the Harold Grinspoon Foundation.

The second project involves the digitization of some 200 tapes of lectures given by Rabbi Greenberg since the 1970's on a variety of Jewish subjects. Digitization is intended to preserve the talks against the inevitable deterioration of the recording tapes. Once digitizing is completed, the talks will be available through the CLAL and other websites. This project is supported by a grant from Aryeh Rubin/Targum Shlishi Foundation.

### ***How to Spot One of Us***

In April, Janet R. Kirchheimer, a respected poet and CLAL Teaching Fellow, spoke at the Association of Jewish Family and Children’s Agencies in Philadelphia on “Successful Intervention with Survivors of the Holocaust.” Ms. Kirchheimer is the author of the hauntingly beautiful book, *How to Spot One of Us*, a collection of poetry inspired by her family’s tragedy in the Shoah. The workshop was designed to assist practitioners in their work with Holocaust survivors.

Speaking as both a daughter of survivors and a poet, Ms. Kirchheimer discussed the importance of living in the space of “not knowing,” and that working with survivors means facing evil on a daily basis from which practitioners cannot emerge unscathed. She talked about the need to breathe, figuratively and literally, because man’s inhumanity against man stifles it, as well as the importance of observing a Shabbat for restoration, whether two hours, an evening, or a day.

“You can’t fix the survivors and you can’t take away their pain,” said Ms. Kirchheimer. “But you can listen and be there. Survivors live with uncertainty. Poetry is about not knowing. It’s about what is written on the page, but also about the silences on the page.”

As part of a Days of Remembrance memorial service, a selection of her poems was read by Multi National Forces at Camp Victory in Baghdad. The request was made by a Major who found her work online, and whose life was touched by the *Shoah* early on.

## **New Book Champions Gender Equity for Women in Jewish Organizational Life**

While women make up a majority of the workers in American Jewish communal life, few have made it to the top of the career ladder. Many reach a ceiling and leave, resulting in a reduced talent pool and ultimately, a diminished workforce.

*Leveling the Playing Field: Advancing Women in Jewish Organizational Life* (2008) by Shifra Bronznick, Didi Goldenhar, and Marty Linsky, a startling new book, looks at this phenomenon, presenting tools and insights to help women advance professionally in the Jewish world. Culling strategies from leading women in the American Jewish world, it offers their approaches for success. Leading the pack, as the first quote in Part I, The Adaptive Challenge, is Donna M. Rosenthal, CLAL's Executive Vice Chairman. She advises building "all kinds of alliances. In the beginning I thought I had to deal with all the issues...myself. What I learned was to go out and talk to others, not only to see where we all were, but to build a supportive cadre...You're really not alone in almost anything you do." For more information, go to [www.advancingwomen.org](http://www.advancingwomen.org).

### **CLAL on "Big Think"**

Launched as a website that could do for thinkers what "You Tube" did for the iPod generation, "Big Think" is a new site for intellectuals who want to engage with leaders on today's big issues. Featured in January, Rabbi Kula was presented as one of the site's key experts, along with such prominent figures as Sen. Ted Kennedy, Supreme Court Justice Steven G. Breyer, and Blackstone co-founder Pete Peterson. Interactive, the site presents a forum for idea sharing and lets users debate with global thought leaders.

"Big Think offers the best democratization of the Internet with a high standard for ideas," said Rabbi Kula. "It shows a commitment to connecting those interested in thoughtful conversation with the new technology." For more information, go to [www.bigthink.com](http://www.bigthink.com).

### **CLAL in Italy**

Loppiano, a small town near Florence founded by the Focolare movement, was the setting for a unique conference on "Love of Neighbor and the Legal Profession," sponsored by Fordham University's Institute on Religion, Law and Lawyer's Work. Using Loppiano as a model of a society based on social love, dignity and worth, the program looked at the challenges of loving your neighbor in the legal system. Joining from CLAL was Rabbi Tsvi Blanchard, Ph.D., Director of Organizational Development.

While there participants toured many of the institutions connected to Loppiano, which boasts 43 successful corporations. Azure, a \$12 million a year baby products business, provided the group with an example of the town's approach to economic sharing – 1/3 of the profits go back into the corporation, 1/3 into social investment, and 1/3 to the poor. The town has no poverty, decisions are communal, and there is no unemployment.

As a key presenter, Rabbi Blanchard discussed the Jewish mandate to love thy neighbor. "We begin to see ways in which the Jewish wisdom tradition, with its emphasis on human relationships, can illuminate the possibility within legal structures for love of

neighbor. In America, we can't tell people to love each other, but that is different than acting lovingly – with care, concern, and reciprocity. Jewish law recognizes the value of multiple positions. All parties have legitimacy, and there is mediation and compromise. This is good for society and leads to a culture of caring, or social love.”

By the conference's end, participants saw that the town functioned in a realistic way, representing inhabitants from over 70 nations. Upon leaving, many made commitments to incorporate what they had learned into their work, including redefining their professional and student relationships, and their approach to business and law classes.

### **Scholar-in-Residence**

Rabbi Steve Greenberg, Director of CLAL's Diversity Project, was recently named the Scholar-in-Residence by Keshet and Hazon, two leading organizations in the American Jewish world. Keshet's mission is to ensure that Jews of all sexual persuasions are fully involved in the broader Jewish community, providing support, training, and resources to create a community that welcomes and affirms all Jews. Hazon's mission, with its environmental focus, is to create a healthier and more sustainable Jewish community as a step towards a healthier and more sustainable world. Its vision is of a renewed Jewish community – one that is rooted in Jewish tradition, engaged with the wider world, and is radically inclusive, passionate and creative. Upon being notified of the honors, Rabbi Greenberg said, “I am eager to be engaged with two stellar organizations that actively integrate rich Jewish wisdoms in their daily efforts to change the world.”

## **BUILDING COMMUNITY AND LEADERSHIP**

Bringing their talents to a variety of institutions nationwide, the CLAL faculty imbues leaders with the skills for creating vibrant Jewish life. Recent highlights include:

**Bhutan:** Rabbi Irwin Kula was invited as a spiritual scholar to join a group visiting this Himalayan Shangri-La to explore the importance of tradition and lead a Passover Seder.

**Kansas City, KS:** Rabbi Brad Hirschfield spoke about finding faith without fanaticism at a book event sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Greater Kansas. Working with federations and other institutions, he presented this topic in a variety of cities including: **El Paso, Los Angeles, Chicago, Atlanta, Greensboro, San Francisco, Madison, Wilmington, and Richmond.**

**New York, NY:** Working with leading legal experts, Rabbi Tsvi Blanchard spoke about Genesis as a cultural reference at a program sponsored by Cardozo Law School.

**Morris County, NJ:** Known as the Kirtan Rabbi, Andrew Hahn brought his unique approach to prayer through song and music to Temple Shalom.

**Sarasota, FL:** Rabbi Kula led a program at the Jewish Family and Children's Services on embracing life's sacred messiness.

**New York, NY:** In June, Congregation B'nai Jeshurun and Kehilat Romemu joined together to present a Kirtan Rabbi Live CD, recorded at the B'nai Jeshurun Sanctuary.

**Washington, D.C.:** Both Rabbis Irwin Kula and Tsvi Blanchard spoke about Jewish wisdom and social policy at the Religious Action Center's Brickner Rabbinic Seminar.

**New York, NY:** Commemorating *Yom HaShoah*, Janet Kirchheimer spoke at a program sponsored by the Hidden Child Foundation and the ADL.

**Philadelphia, PA:** Rabbi Blanchard talked about hope, healing and holiness at the Association of Jewish Family and Children's Agencies.

**New Orleans, LA:** Rabbi Hirschfield spoke to the Young Leadership Group on Faith to Jazz, at a program sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans.

## CLAL IN THE NEWS

Appearing regularly in the media around the country, CLAL brings fresh insights to today's news. Recent coverage includes:

*You Don't Have To Be Wrong For Me To Be Right: Finding Faith Without Fanaticism*

- KTVK-TV, "Good Day Arizona"
- WHAM-TV (Rochester), "News this Morning"
- CNN Radio, "The Paula Gordon Show"
- Cable Radio Network, "AM Show"
- XM Satellite Radio, "For Heaven's Sake"
- Sirius Satellite Radio, "The Busted Halo"
- KERA (NPR, Dallas), "Think"
- Illinois Radio Network, "Eye on Illinois"
- KFOG (San Francisco), "Beat of the Bay"
- Wisconsin Public Radio, "The Morning Show"
- *USA Today*
- *Arizona Daily Star*
- *Rochester Democrat & Chronicle*
- *Christian Science Monitor*
- *Atlanta Jewish Times*
- *Jewish Journal of Greater Los Angeles*
- *Washington Jewish Week*
- *New Jersey Jewish News*

Other highlights include:

- NBC-TV, *The Today Show*, Rabbi Irwin Kula on multi-faith families.
- WNBC-TV, "Live at Five," Rabbi Kula on the Pope's visit.
- KKZZ-AM (Southern Calif.), "The Maria Sanchez Show," with Rabbi Kula on the sacredness of paying taxes. Other shows include "The Jeff Farias Show," (KPHX, Phoenix), and "Louie B. Free" (WASN, Cleveland).
- KOOP-FM (Austin) "Soul Talk Radio," with Rabbi Kula on religious pluralism.
- TRU-TV (Court-TV), "Open Court," Rabbi Hirschfield on a "thrill kill" case.
- *Texas Jewish Post*, a feature on CLAL's holiday cards as a unique resource.
- *The Jewish Week*, oped by Rabbi Kula on Jewish identity under construction.