



**RECONSTRUCTING
JUDAISM**

Deeply rooted. Boldly relevant.

FY 2025 Annual Report

September 1, 2024 – August 31, 2025



A Letter from Our President & CEO



As I prepare to step down, I want to share my pride in all that Reconstructing Judaism and the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College have accomplished over these last 13 years, and my gratitude for the collaboration of the countless extraordinary people within the movement.

Because of the Reconstructionist movement's longstanding commitments to inclusion, I knew when I applied for this position that, as a woman and a lesbian, I would neither be disqualified nor tokenized. I benefited from tremendous allyship that enabled my rabbinate and my presidency, and I have aspired to be a strong ally to others. One of my greatest joys has been to travel around North America and meet literally thousands of Reconstructionists, interested and interesting people who are willing to build the Jewish communities they want to live in, which includes making space for people they can't even quite yet imagine.

As I began my tenure, I wanted to help folks make the transition from the ethnic Judaism of the years following World War II into post-ethnic Judaism; to joyfully embrace the growing numbers of Jews of color in our communities; to contribute to constructive conversation as the consensus around Israel began to fracture; to make the case for non-fundamentalist Judaism and religion in general. I have had the privilege of doing that holy work, even as the world has changed and changed again. More recently I have also focused on making the case for covenantal community across difference; defending democracy against populism and autocracy; bolstering Jewish identity in the face of rising antisemitism and insisting that the fight against antisemitism need not mean a retreat from commitments to racial justice. As we make our way through liminal times, I continue to believe that a Reconstructionist approach can help to midwife a new reality built on the recognition of our interdependence and the obligations that arise out of this recognition.

Thank you for this extraordinary opportunity to serve and lead. I look forward to supporting and celebrating Rabbi Elliott Tepperman in his leadership of the Reconstructionist movement as, together, we nourish ourselves on the wisdom of our ancestors and the insight of our peers to bring to life Judaism that is deeply rooted and boldly relevant. May we continue to go *mihayil lehayil*, from strength to strength.

Deborah Waxman

Rabbi Deborah Waxman, Ph.D.
President and CEO



THRIVING COMMUNITIES

Strengthening Jewish Life Together

During FY2025, more than 600 Reconstructionist Jews joined a December 2024 virtual convening to explore communal divides over Israel and Palestine with curiosity, compassion and deep listening. The event, “All of Israel Is Responsible for One Another,” became a signature moment for the organization, led by the Thriving Communities department in partnership with the Office of the President and the Joint Israel Commission.

Behind that convening was a team that spent FY2025 strengthening congregations: coaching lay leaders and rabbis, supporting new educational models and helping communities navigate transitions, large and small.

The year also marked the movement’s first Reparations Shabbat, inviting Reconstructionist communities to engage in a weekend of learning, reflection and action rooted in the movement’s commitment to racial justice and reparative work.

Another milestone was the launch of a new educator portal through the Wenger-Markowitz Family Education Initiative, providing a searchable database of curated Reconstructionist curricula that helps educators build distinctive Jewish identities for generations to come.

*Photos courtesy of:
Am Haskalah
Ner Shalom
Columbia Jewish Congregation
Congregation Shaarei Shamayim
Bet Haverim*



“Maintaining Jewish peoplehood in these times is a big challenge and more important than ever. The Plenum, a convening of representatives from every Reconstructionist community, provides an important role in lifting up the voice of local Jewish communities in the direction and governance of our movement — and we are organizing to ensure that voice is strong.

With the American Jewish community divided in places around ideology, theology and politics, we are working to ensure that the Plenum provides support for strong, resilient local Reconstructionist communities, as well as ensuring that the voice of congregations is considered in the direction of the movement.”

**—Marc Overbeck,
Plenum Chair**

By the Numbers



92
affiliated
congregations
and havurot



15,500
affiliated
households
spanning three
continents



100
consultations
and
visits to
congregations



600+
participants in the
December 2024
Israel Convening



190
participants in the
2025 Reparations
Program

Learning in the Classroom, Leading in the World

Reconstructionist Rabbinical College students demonstrated this year what it means to build a thriving, purposeful learning community. Among the courses they took were Rabbi Mira Wasserman, Ph.D.'s midrash seminar on *Slavery and the Rabbinic Imagination*; Professor Sarra Lev's advanced Talmud class on *Shamta* (excommunication); Amanda Beckenstein Mbuvi, Ph.D.'s new multifaith course on *Sharing Scriptures*; and independent study projects exploring students' interests beyond the formal curriculum. Students also engaged in supervised research through the 1299 Reckoning Project, a racial justice initiative examining RRC's institutional history and its relationship to the College's move from North Philadelphia to Wyncote, Pa.

The community also found meaningful ways to tend to one another beyond the classroom. Each semester began with an immersive retreat that brought students together for learning, relationship-building and spiritual grounding, creating a cherished anchor of RRC life. The January 2025 Louis Bunis Memorial Lecture brought Professor Mira Sucharov, Ph.D., to campus for a timely and important conversation on Israel and Palestine. Moments of play and gathering between classes also served as reminders that renewal is not a luxury but a spiritual necessity. In all of these moments, students were quietly practicing the skills that will undergird their rabbinate: how to learn together, care for one another and show up for the Jewish people even in the most difficult times.



Fieldwork Education

Field education is where classroom learning becomes lived rabbinic practice. Through both the General and Advanced Field Education programs, RRC students work in a wide array of internships, from service-leading roles—including High Holiday pulpits and ongoing congregational placements—to Hillels, chaplaincy, social justice organizations, nonprofit leadership, and educational settings serving learners of all ages. Each placement offers rich opportunities for students to deepen their skills while serving communities with purpose. The diversity of these placements reflects RRC's commitment to building partnerships with organizations and communities that help shape the next generation of Reconstructionist rabbis.

Across all settings, students hone core rabbinic skills: service-leading, *leyning*, life cycle rituals, pastoral care and education. Whether sitting with elders and their families at the end of life in chaplaincy roles, meeting the diverse needs of college students at Hillel, teaching in religious schools or advancing causes like climate justice, immigrant rights and economic equality, students are enriching the Jewish communities they serve and the wider world.



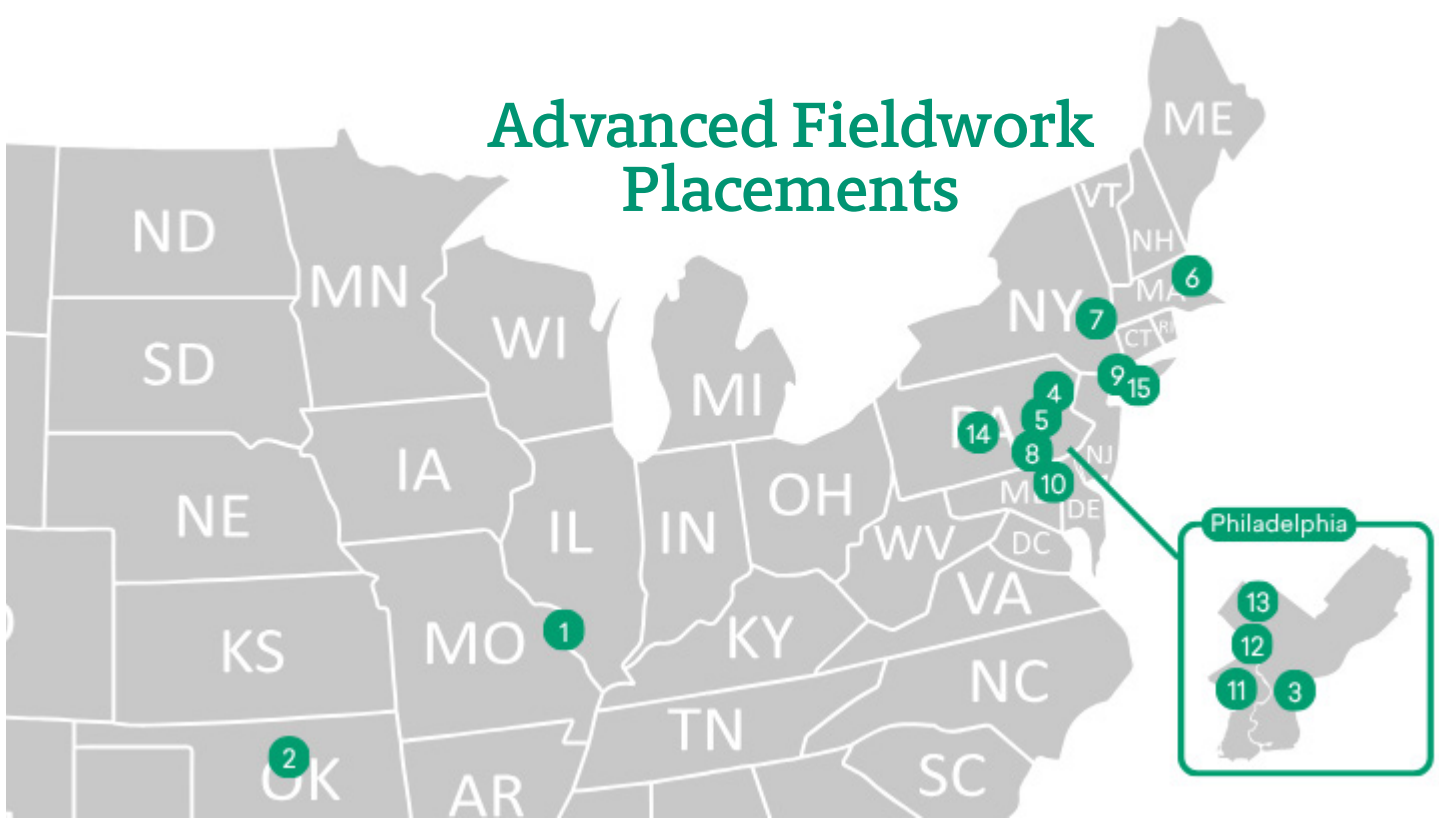
LEO LEVINE '28

In 2024-25, I took Medieval Thought and Civilization classes, Life Cycle 1 & 2 and the Hebrew, *Tanakh* and Talmud trajectory. Through these classes, I continued to develop my personal orientation to Jewish prayer and practice, expanded my ability to navigate Biblical and Rabbinic texts in their original language, and fortified the foundation of my practical rabbinic skills. In addition to

my classes, I worked at a senior living community leading monthly Shabbat services and holiday programming; helped develop, build and launch the new Harmoniyah webpage highlighting liturgical music written by individuals in the Reconstructionist movement; and served as the Community Life Intern at RRC. I was also elected to the board of the Reconstructionist Student Association (RSA), and continued my role as a member

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Advanced Fieldwork Placements



- ① **Shir Hadash** | St. Louis, MO
- ② **Oklahoma City Police Wellness Unit**
Oklahoma City, OK
- ③ **Tribe 12** | Philadelphia, PA
- ④ **Congregation KI** | Allentown, PA
- ⑤ **Or Hadash** | Fort Washington, PA
- ⑥ **Congregation Dorshei Tzedek**
Newton, MA
- ⑦ **Eden Village Camp** | Putnam Valley, NY
- ⑧ **Ohev Shalom** | Wallingford, PA
- ⑨ **NYC Jewish Liberation Education Program**
New York, NY
- ⑩ **University of Delaware Hillel** | Newark, DE
- ⑪ **Kol Tzedek** | Philadelphia, PA
- ⑫ **Mishkan Shalom** | Philadelphia, PA
- ⑬ **Germantown Jewish Centre**
Philadelphia, PA
- ⑭ **PA Poor People's Campaign
Faith Leader's Team** | PA
- ⑮ **Congregation Beit Simchat Torah**
New York, NY

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of the RRC Music Collective. In my roles focused on the RRC community, I was able to work closely with the administration to advocate for student needs, build mutually supportive relationships with my fellow classmates and develop my ability to write *drashot*. Among the accomplishments I am most proud of are *re-kashering* the RRC kitchen, joining Music Collective in leading *Kabbalat Shabbat* services at different synagogues in the Philadelphia area and helping establish Thursday morning *davening*. Thursday morning *davening* was established by a group of students (including me) who wanted to add a weekly

shakharit service that used traditional liturgy and included a Torah service. It has provided a low-stakes opportunity for students to develop their service-leading skills, to regularly practice *leyning* from the Torah and to share a piece of Torah related to that week's *parshah*. At the end of the school year, I took a job working for the Greater Philly Hillel Network, specifically serving as the rabbinic intern at Haverford College. The work that I had completed during this school year successfully prepared me to assume this larger and more outward-facing role, something I am very grateful for.

By the Numbers



46

STUDENTS
enrolled in
FY25

83%

RECEIVED
SCHOLARSHIPS

10

RRC 2025
GRADUATES

\$14,038

AVERAGE FINANCIAL AWARD

(50% of full-time tuition of \$28,000);
scholarships ranged from \$4,000 to \$23,000

Rituals That Meet the Moment

Ritualwell continued to cultivate Jewish writers through both new and established communities. In its pilot year, the Jewish Writers' Circles launched 13 peer-led groups — 12 across North America and one in the United Kingdom — bringing emerging and seasoned writers together through monthly gatherings rooted in Jewish wisdom and creativity. A highlight of the year was an in-person Write-In, where participants workshoped their writing and explored what it means to be a Jewish writer today. The program was so successful that funding has been secured for two additional years.

ADVOT celebrated its fifth year as a vibrant online community where Jewish writers, poets and ritual creators gather weekly to share their work, learn from inspiring teachers and support one another's creative and spiritual growth.



By the Numbers



4,000
rituals available
online (including
500 added in
FY25)



978
attendees
to Ritualwell's
events,
immersions and
asynchronous
classes; 25
members of Advot
(online creative
community of
Jewish writers);
130 participants
in Jewish writers'
circles



605,228
pageviews of
[ritualwell.org/
ritual/abortion-
ritual](https://ritualwell.org/ritual/abortion-ritual),
Ritualwell's
top online
resource

Why We Give



CATHLEEN COHEN

Ritualwell offers us a much-needed and unique platform for connecting with our Jewishness in relevant and creative ways. It's been developed over the past several years by wise leaders to respond to modern needs and a wide tent of backgrounds. Here we can take a course and post our own prose, poems and prayers. We can also locate prayers, rituals and writing on a vast array of topics. As one who has studied with others through Ritualwell, I've been able to dive deep into and expand my connection with the Jewish community. I donate to Ritualwell each year since it makes a unique and powerful contribution to the Jewish community.

STEPHEN GERARD

Since being introduced by our former beloved Rabbi Katie Mitzrahi, I have come to believe that Reconstructing Judaism will provide expanded opportunity and incentive to formerly unaffiliated Jews like myself to reconnect with our meaningful Jewish heritage.

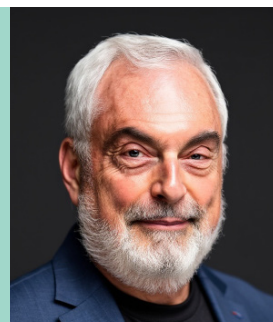


NANCY KATZ AND KATHY WILDMAN

It is important to my wife Kathy and me to support Reconstructing Judaism, in addition to supporting our congregation, JRC. Reconstructing Judaism is the bedrock on which we build the daring and innovative Judaism that sustains us.

ALAN RUBIN

I strongly support the Reconstructionist Movement because it does what I believe a spiritual community should do: emphasize the moral and ethical imperatives drawn from Jewish tradition that help people live better lives in service to one another, their communities and the world. By doing so we create strong, inclusive, safe spaces to learn, to teach and to do and give direction and meaning to our lives and the lives of our children.



The Students Who Benefit



RAPHAEL MORRIS, RRC '29

Throughout the history of our civilization, Jewish communities have toiled to ensure that Jewish scholarship and leadership are accessible to people regardless of background or financial circumstances. I want to express my profound gratitude for your financial support in my rabbinical journey. It is no small thing to move across the globe from Australia, and it is only thanks to your generosity that I am able to take these first steps on the path toward my rabbinate.

MARIA PULZETTI, ASSOCIATE RABBI, GERMANTOWN JEWISH CENTRE, RRC '26

Every day I am grateful for the privilege and blessing it is to study and teach Torah. Your gift makes that possible for me. Ultimately, the transformative power of Torah brought me to rabbinical school. I aspire to serve people as a rabbi, accompanying people at moments of transition and joy and grief and in ordinary moments too, in a mode that acknowledges the beauty and complexity of our tradition, the urgency of righteous action and the possibility of transcendence. As an awestruck heir of this tradition that enriches my life in so many ways, I want to be there to share Judaism with others.



HOLLY SMITH, RRC '29

Over the last several years, a growing passion for Torah, Jewish learning, spiritual leadership and *Tikkun Olam* has drawn me toward the rabbinate. Within this incredibly challenging year for Jewish communities across the world, I have found a spiritual and intellectual home at RRC, and my experience there has deepened my commitment to creating spaces of support, nourishment and restoration for the Jewish people ... Shifting from being an essential worker back into academia is financially daunting, and I literally would not be able to follow this calling without your support.

ERIN VIOLA, RRC '28

Through the rigorous study of *Tanakh* and rabbinic texts, and soulful *tefillah*, RRC is empowering me to become a rabbi who seeks healing, and one who strives to bring people together in our deeply troubled world. I am grateful for the generous support of my rabbinic education, and for the continued support of the Reconstructionist movement. I truly believe that the movement's emphasis on democracy, Jewish tradition, and cultivation of shared values will continue to shape and lead the Jewish American community.



Donors in Fiscal Year 2025



1,156
donors



40
states



11
countries



\$3,793,559
raised in
support of
our work

We are grateful to the donors who made our work possible, including:

ANNUAL DONORS

Whose gifts throughout the fiscal year sustain our mission.

MOMENTUM CAMPAIGN

Leading the way for Jewish innovation and impact.

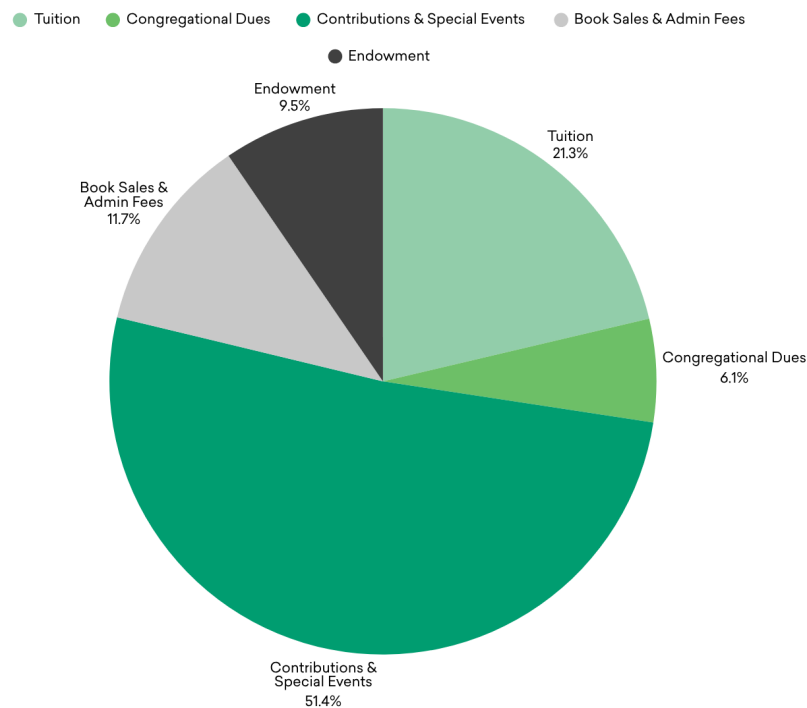
KAPLAN SOCIETY

Honoring those who have included Reconstructing Judaism in their estate plans.

A complete list of donors is available online.



Revenue & Expenses



FY25 Unrestricted Revenue

Tuition*	\$1,137,444
Congregational Dues	\$325,188
Contributions & Special Events	\$2,741,209
Book Sales & Admin Fees	\$623,494
Endowment	\$509,565
Total	\$5,336,900

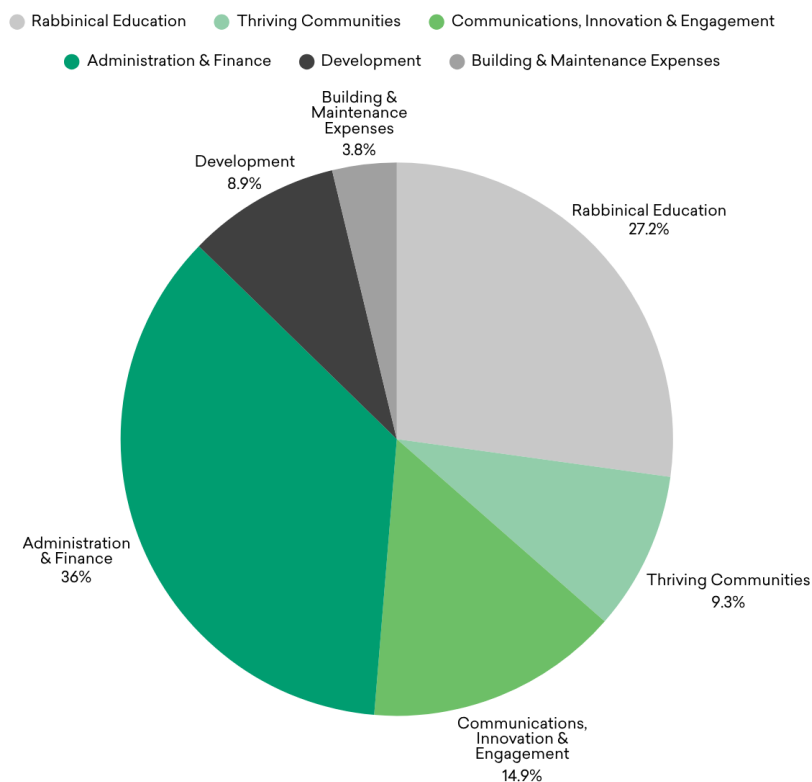
*Tuition revenue includes both out of pocket payments from students and scholarships funded by donors and our endowment. In FY25, this latter category totaled \$507,628.

Assets FY25

Cash & Equivalents	\$2,272,329
Accounts Receivable, Pledges Receivable and Other Assets	\$1,864,173
Beneficial Interest in Trusts	\$1,392,804

Investments	\$16,670,824
– Operating Funds (Including Restricted Funds)*	\$1,340,707
– Endowment Funds*	\$15,330,117
Land, Building and Equipment	\$686,364
Total Assets	\$22,886,494

* Operating Funds and Endowment Funds are components of total Investments and together equal the Investments balance reported above.



FY25 Unrestricted Expenses

Rabbinical Education	\$1,352,514
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Thriving Communities	\$460,332
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Communications, Innovation & Engagement	\$739,770
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Administration & Finance	\$1,790,078
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Development	\$445,161
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Building & Maintenance Expenses	\$187,446
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Total	\$4,975,301
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Liabilities and Fund Balances

Accounts Payable and Other Short-Term Liabilities	\$447,261
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Notes Payable	\$815,606
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Total Liabilities	\$1,262,867
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Net Assets

Without Donor Restrictions	\$2,594,084
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With Donor Restrictions	\$19,029,543
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Total Net Assets	\$21,623,627
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Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$22,886,494
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Boldly Relevant.



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JUDAISM**