

## Kenissa Konnections October 2021

### Message from Rabbi Sid

*This was delivered on Sept. 15, 2021 as the Kol Nidre service at Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation (Bethesda, MD), where Rabbi Sid is the Founding Rabbi*

#### Eleh Toldot: These are the Generations

I like funerals.

Don't get me wrong. I know that funerals represent loss. I feel deep empathy for the mourners. And death can also be tragic, especially when disease or tragedy cuts short a life precipitously. But even though the loss of a loved one leaves an emotional hole in one's soul that may never fully heal, uplifting the accomplishments and values of the deceased never ceases to inspire me. I like funerals because they teach me a ton about life.



Sometimes, when I know the deceased well, I wonder why, in all of our previous interactions, I never learned about the many things that got revealed by the eulogies. I accept some of the blame for that. But I would also fault the widely accepted social convention that too much probing in a social situation is not polite. And then there is the converse problem, even more common. Being in a conversation where your counterpart does not ask you a single question about you at all.

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### Kenissa Network Meet-Up Thursday, October 21 at 1pm (Eastern)

Remember the excitement of meeting peers also creating new models of Jewish life and community when you attended a National *Kenissa* gathering? Join the Meet-Up with Rabbi Sid. Each participant will provide an update of their organization and their plans for the future. Meet colleagues from across the country doing cool things like you.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88498966716?pwd=Zm8xamNySzBtczNDZlZURFJkZkZxZz09>

Meeting ID: 884 9896 6716  
Passcode: 012381

#### News Blurp

The Mandel Institute for Nonprofit Leadership is excited to announce a new fellowship for leaders in Jewish education. This is an amazing opportunity for innovative educational leaders poised to have an even greater impact on their school/organization and on the wider field. Applications for the [Mandel Educational Leadership Program](#) are open and we are looking for exceptional candidates to apply to the program. Please read a bit about [who we're looking for](#), and consider applying yourself and/or sharing with anyone you think might be a good fit.

### Build and Raise

Building relationships to help raise more money



You are busy working on your year-end appeal. Writing, editing, rewriting, considering every single word and

how readers will react to it.

Fundraising copy is an artform. There are [rules and best practices you should be following](#). Your goal? [Ensure that your appeal will stand out](#) from the plethora of letters and emails that people will be receiving during the last six weeks of the year.

At its core, your fundraising appeals should share with readers a problem in their community that they can solve. To mobilize them to take action, you should use what I call the "story of one." Share the story of one of your service recipients and the obstacles they face which prevents them from moving forward.



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*Ephraim Gopin is the founder of [1832 Communications](#), an agency which helps nonprofits build relationships and raise more money by connecting their fundraising and [marketing strategies](#). You can subscribe to [Ephraim's free daily newsletter](#), which includes relevant content for any NPO role you fill.*

### Braver Leadership

Lead wiser,  
Lead braver



**Don't Meet for the First Time at the Negotiation Table**

My nonprofit was recently curating an Israeli Art Lending Library, when the funder invited me to consider including artwork curated by Valeria Geselev, for a project called [100 Sunrises a Day](#), itself co-sponsored by a mutual funder. As this was a very welcome introduction, arranged by two trusted partners, which stood to directly benefit my project, I didn't invest the same strategy in structuring the first meeting that I otherwise would have. Even with a "friendly" negotiation, I should have taken the initiative to reach out to Ms. Geselev through a partner, for a 1:1 meeting in advance of our formal business negotiation.



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*Arinne Braverman is a Kenissa Network member, Jewish Organizing Initiative alumna, and currently serves as the Executive Director of [Returning the Sparks](#) and President of [From Strength to Strength](#).*

## Jewish Megatrends and Responses

*Editor's Note: Every Kenissa Network member was asked to respond to Rabbi Sid's lead essay in [Jewish Megatrends](#) on the future of the Jewish community. We'll be featuring one of those essays in each issue.*

### Taking our Core Values Beyond the Jewish Community

Cat J. Zavis



I see my work aligned with all four of Rabbi Sid's propositions in his lead essay for *Jewish Megatrends* and, venture to say that, if we want to reach younger Jews, we need to integrate our work in all four areas. The magic and wisdom of our tradition is that it integrates all four areas in a comprehensive and cohesive whole. It challenges us to go beyond merely reducing the suffering of others and calls us to build a society and world that actually is inherently loving and just itself. It is an anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist, pro-environment, pro-love, pro-caring, and pro-justice message—a message we'd be wise to listen to today.

Here then are some ways that our work aligns with each of the principles:

**Chochma/Wisdom:** We promote the deepening of Jewish wisdom, both on our Tikkun website ([www.tikkun.org](http://www.tikkun.org)) and in our magazine with articles on "Jewish wisdom" as well as many others that are interdisciplinary. In the trainings in Prophetic Empathy and Revolutionary Love ([www.spiritualprogressives.org/training](http://www.spiritualprogressives.org/training)) that I lead, I draw deeply on Jewish teachings as well as on the teachings that are shared by all faith and spiritual traditions. I draw on this wisdom to help guide how and what I teach, how we interact with each other and what kind of spiritual activist movement we are building. This includes, how we talk about, understand, and challenge the systems and structures of oppression and power in our society and how we talk about those who have a different worldview or understanding than we do.

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## How We Built This

*Editor's Note: Every Kenissa Network member was asked to explain how they launched their new enterprise, a feature we call "How We Built This". We'll feature one organization in each issue.*

### Living with a Christian, a Muslim and a Baha'i. I learned to share Judaism with the World

Hadar Cohen

I was born in Jerusalem, a city that is the pinnacle of multi-faith expression. Yet instead of growing up with a sense of co-existence, I was surrounded by segregation both politically and communally. I did not know what truly living together in unity with other practitioners of Abrahamic faiths would be like.



When I was 10, my family and I moved to New Jersey. This transition to a new place was when I first learned to see and build bridges starting with myself— between my American and Middle Eastern identities. Bridging these cultural differences internally has become a lifelong project.

My Jewish identity has greatly shaped who I am. I was born into a Mizrahi and Sephardic home where prayer and devotion to God were core to our practice. I was in love with my tradition at an early age, learning the wisdom of the Torah and practicing Judaism like my ancestors did.

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