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Ruach Hiddush - רוח חדוש

רבנים וחזנים למען חופש דת ושוויון

Rabbis and Cantors for Religious Freedom and Equality in Israel

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Introduction

December 7, 2017 - 19 כסלו 5778

We hope you enjoy the new name of RRFEI:

Ruach Hiddush - רוח חדוש.

We were founded 3 years ago as a group of rabbis who support the work of Hiddush for a pluralistic Israel. The new name better reflects our founding purpose. Also, we now include cantors. It's not just rabbis

anymore, but the כל י קודש of the Jewish people.

We hope you enjoy this edition. Or more honestly, I hope so, because I have taken the perhaps egotistical step of including an article I wrote in response to a much debated assertion by Shmuel Rosner that Reform and Conservative Jews are less than 1% of the population of Israel, I

Why We Will Win: a Response to Shmuel Rosner

By Mark H. Levin

Reform Judaism is not primarily a movement. Reform Judaism is an approach, a means of viewing Jewish law, history and practice, consistent with the intellectual demands of modernity.

Shmuel Rosner published an article stating that the number of Reform Jews in Israel is less than one percent. He defines Reform Judaism exclusively as members of an Israeli movement, and those who are willing to identify themselves as members. He is wrong.

You'll find Rosner's article [here](#), at Rosner's Domain.

Reform and Conservative Judaism are, in fact, movements in Diaspora communities that some will consider a theology because they or their devotees

hope the thoughts are helpful in your own thinking, and would love to hear from you at: ruach@hiddush.org. The link to Rosner's comments will be found in my article.

Two other articles address the crises in Jewish life: notice that Yeshiva World took special note of Hiddush's survey regarding the percentage of Israelis who support work on shabbat to maintain Israel's trains. Increasingly Hiddush's surveys are being used by interested parties and Israeli decision makers to understand the trends of thought on important issues of Religion and State. What is the role of Jewish law in Israeli life, and what kind of Jewish State is Israel to be? In Israel's 70th year, clearly these issues are as hotly debated as ever.

Finally, Israel's Prime Minister seems to have decided that most of us and our congregants no longer matter, nor are our issues to be respected. Most often we hear that Israel has decided that we will all assimilate in a generation or two anyway, and Israel will do just fine with the support of the Orthodox and Christian evangelicals. This article

express a series of theological perspectives which reflect various thinkers and theological stances. Followers of philosophers as diverse as Martin Buber, Emil Fackenheim, Mordecai Kaplan and Abraham Joshua Heschel, among others, may all find themselves in the same "movement."

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Hiddush Survey: Most Israelis Prefer Railways Maintenance Work On Shabbos

Yeshiva World News

Hiddush survey following the crisis over railway repairs on Shabbat in Israel:

Hiddush survey following the crisis over railway repairs on Shabbat in Israel:

71% of Jewish Israelis favor allowing railway maintenance work Shabbat. Only 23% oppose it.

A great majority of voters for the non-chareidi Government Coalition parties are in favor. Hiddush CEO Rabbi Uri Regev:

"The public believes in the principle of 'live and let live,' and it wants to support freedom of religion and freedom from religion in Israel"

Seventy-one percent of the adult Jewish public in Israel supports the position that a limited amount of Shabbos maintenance should be allowed for safety purposes on Israel's railways in order to prevent serious damage to the train service on weekdays. This position is shared by 90% of secular Jewish Israelis and the majority of the non-chareidi Government Coalition parties, including 65% of Likud voters and 64% of Bayit Yehudi voters.

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explores this wholly unanticipated and bizarre turn in Jewish history: that the first State of the Jewish people in two millennia, the State dedicated to ingathering of the exiles no matter how tenuously connected historically or how far removed, should suddenly turn its back on the vast majority of North American Jewry. We would love to hear more from you: how are you reacting, and what are you telling your people?

איחולים להנחה, and we certainly look forward to hearing your musings on the directions of the Jewish people,

Mark

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Divorcing the Diaspora: How Netanyahu Is Finally Writing Off U.S. Jews

By **Judy Maltz, Haaretz**

The Israeli government's decision to suspend the Western Wall compromise is part of the growing evidence, observers say, that something fundamental has changed in the relationship.

Until not long ago, Jewish Agency Chairman Natan Sharansky was the go-to guy for anyone seeking assurance that Israel did, indeed, value its relationship with American Jews.

Every time it seemed the "Western Wall deal" – that promise to provide Reform and Conservative Jews with an egalitarian place of their own for prayer at the Jewish holy site – was off, Sharansky could be counted on to argue otherwise. I know Prime Minister Benjamin well, he would tell the skeptics, and no other Israeli leader understands, as he does, the strategic importance of the American Jewish community for Israel.

The former Soviet dissident is singing a different tune nowadays. That became profoundly evident during a special Knesset session held last week on the Western Wall controversy, attended by a delegation of world Jewish leaders.

Noting that the Israeli government had shown no inclination whatsoever to mend the growing rift with American Jewry since the deal was officially suspended more than four months ago, Sharansky warned the participants: "It is inevitable that the crisis will continue."

Coming from the last of the true believers, his words reverberated loudly.

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רו"ח ה'הדו"ש היא ארגון של רבנים וחזנים הפועל למימוש מלא של הבטחת מגילת הצעמאות לחופש דת ושוויון. מימוש הבטחה זו חיוני לחיזוק זהותה של מדינת ישראל כמדינה יהודית ודמוקרטית ולהמשך השותפות עם העם היהודי לתפוצותיו.

Ruach Hiddush is a network of Rabbis and Cantors working to fully realize the promise of Israel's Declaration of Independence, which guarantees religious freedom and equality. The fulfillment of this promise is vital for strengthening Israel as a Jewish and democratic state, and for maintaining the solidarity of world Jewry.

a project of Hiddush ש ל ה'הדו"ש

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