



My Jewish Drive



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Meeting and connecting with other Jews has become not simply a joy but a purpose in my life, learning about others' interpretations and having conversations is a delight and truly meaningful. This is a joy for me, making my life enriched as I keep meeting and befriending Jews of all stripes and walks of life.

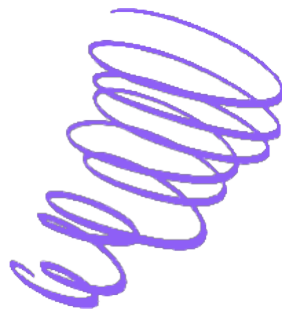


This is the story of how Judaism, Jewish life and the different Jews from across the denominational spectrum have helped to build up my life. My identity has been collated through the learning and lives that I have been exposed to throughout my life. I have entitled it my Jewish drive because this story is about how Judaism and Jewish people has grown into my drive and also because my drive to continue being Jewish and my Jewish path is largely built upon living in such a diverse Jewish world with so many Jewish lives helping to make it up. I will explain throughout this piece how my Jewish drive has been crafted and why people have been so influential in creating my Jewish drive and the Jewish identity that I so proudly claim as my own today.



I embraced Judaism as soon as I could walk, but never conventionally. I was always drawn to our stories of fighting, of being outcasts, of learning. I have loved it and related to many of the struggles faced by characters and people throughout Jewish history. After becoming a bat mitzvah I was able to layn (read from the Torah), wear a tallit and fully participate in all aspects of my faith. I have continued to do so, using it as a deepening of my communal connection to the Jewish faith. In university I have attempted to keep reaching out and using my Jewish faith as a tool to allow people in and to feel accepted. Jewish teachings have helped me throughout my life in a myriad of ways.

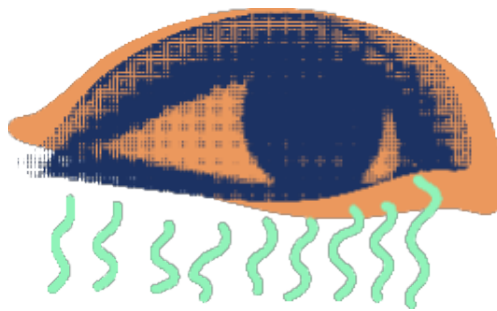
My family has helped to add to this drive, encouraging my start of an egalitarian minyan at university. They have supported my learning of Torah, my debates of Jewish text through constant engagement in religious conversations. In encouraging my questions, my study and my interest in any aspect of faith and Torah that I've found interesting, I have had the joy of taking part in Judaism fully and totally. My parents have specifically added to my Jewish knowledge by answering every question I have and actively encouraging my meeting of a variety of Jewish people that practice in every form of Judaism.



Meeting Jewish people from across denominations I have forged my own specific Jewish identity. I know what is right for me because I've seen all that I can in the Jewish world and Jewish spaces. My Jewish identity has been built up out of genuine learning and interactions. Interactions that I am so grateful for because it has taught me tolerance and has taught me the depth of faith and community.

I attended a MASA programme in Israel and this deepened my understanding of Jewish faith and Jewish living. I met Jews from across the globe and learnt everyone's interpretation of Judaism based on the country they grew up in and their own individual Jewish exposure.

The Modiin-based organic farm Hava ve Adam helped to teach me the different kinds of Jews in Israel. I learnt of Zionist Jews, non-religious Jews, Jews who'd grown up on Kibbutz and a range of other Jewish lives and worlds within Israel. These experiences are the best in formulating my Jewish thinking and relationship to the Jewish homeland of Israel.



I am deeply grateful for the communal opportunities that Judaism has provided for me; from UJS, to youth movements and different Masa programs. Each and every opportunity has meant everything to me in strengthening my Jewish drive and creating my Jewish life and social life.

Meeting and connecting with other Jews has become not simply a joy but a purpose in my life, learning about others interpretations and having conversations is a delight and truly meaningful. This meaning is a joy for me, making my life more enriched as I keep meeting and befriending Jews of all stripes and walks of life. I hope to always make connections, friends, have conversations and embrace the opportunities that Judaism has allowed me to have.

I finish this story thanking everyone that has ever helped me. Thanking anyone who has ever guided me, taught me and loved me during my Jewish path. Each addition to my Jewish journey has educated me in every single way. From a young age my life has been greatly enriched through Judaism and other Jews that have taught me how to both be Jewish and to become my own Jew. It is now, today that I am happily my own Jewish thinker, Jewish adult and Jewish woman able to fully take on all that those roles can offer me as a Jewish person.