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# Podcasts Aren’t Just for Millennials

by Caline Chitayat August 29, 2016



Address is the founder and director of a website called Jewish Sacred Aging, which seeks to provide “resources and texts that feature discussions on the implications of the revolution in longevity for Baby Boomers and their families.” That dense explanation essentially describes Rabbi Address’ goal to encourage open conversations about life, aging and death throughout the Jewish community. The New Jersey rabbi, who has long been affiliated with the Reform movement, has written several books and offers a number of workshops and presentations regarding community involvement, Jewish approaches to health and how to make what he calls sacred decisions. Recently, Rabbi Address revived his website’s weekly podcast to provide a space for live interviews on subjects, from mindfulness meditation to inclusion and diversity throughout the Jewish community.

In July, Rabbi Address interviewed Rabbi Simcha Raphael on a topic that many are uncomfortable speaking about. Rabbi Raphael, psychotherapist and director of the Da’at Institute, discusses death, dying and bereavement and explores the Jewish perspective on the afterlife. The Da’at Institute is dedicated to death awareness, advocacy and training.

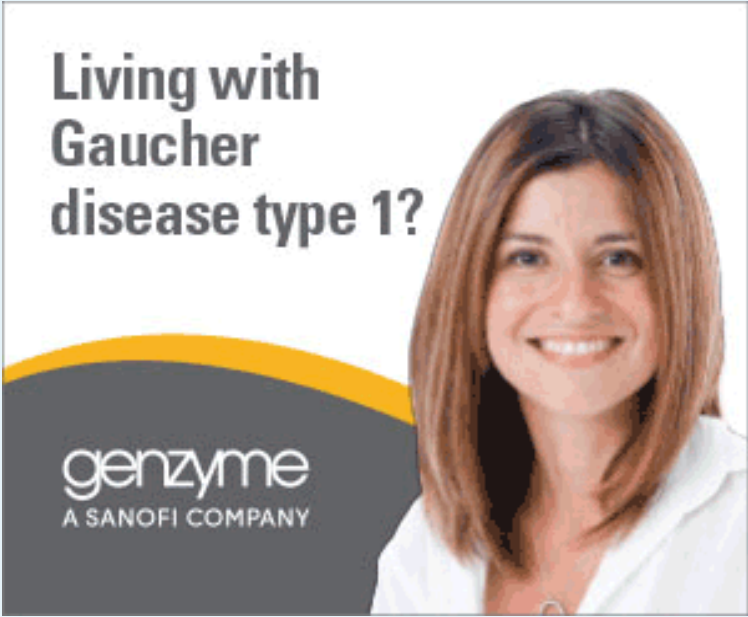
Rabbi Raphael admits that death is unsettling, but contends it is something that we should be open about. We know we cannot escape death, and although the conversation never seems to get easier, it’s important that we learn to discuss aspects of it. In the podcast, Rabbi Raphael offers ways for audiences to understand the emotional and spiritual effect of death.

“In my early 20s, my closest friend was killed in a car accident, and it was the type of trauma that is life-changing for people,” Rabbi Raphael says in the podcast episode. “Here we were burying a 21-year-old guy in the middle of a cold Montreal winter in Mount Pleasant Park. There was nothing pleasant about [that day], but I felt a sense of his presence.”

Rabbi Raphael recalls that on the day his friend died, the two of them had cooked a meal together.

“There were leftovers in my fridge, and I came back in the middle of the shiva and went, ‘Is he there? Is his energy in the food?’”

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### Herb’n Donuts Mobilizes Gluten-Free and Custom Desserts

In an unassuming food truck parked inside the exclusive campus of Illumina, a biotechnology company, I found the cure to a bad day. Maybe Herb’n Donuts sets up there because geneticists need something really good after a long day of sequencing, but regardless I’m glad I found my way there. Started by former kosher caterer... [Read More »](#)

### Voter Registration Historically High in California

California has set a new record for registered voters – 18,251,826 people as of September 9, according to California Secretary of State Alex Padilla. “This is a major milestone,” Padilla said in a press release. “The high profile 2016 election cycle, social media networks harnessing the power of online voter registration and relentless outreach by... [Read More »](#)

### Unknown Jewish Tapestries are a World Treasure

Jews love Sicily. Everywhere you go, you meet tourists with last names on the the Schwartz–Cohen–Steinberg–Benvenisti spectrum, and it’s not unusual to see Jewish stars, Jewish-themed tattoos, and Jews kvelling over pasta dishes they discover in little-known restaurants. In Siracusa, some Jewish travelers from the U.S. and Israel descend 56 steps into a mikvah, ritual... [Read More »](#)

### Taking the Edge Off

Prostate Cancer is the number one silent disease in men and early detection is the key,” says Lyle LaRosh, President of the Informed Prostate Cancer Support Group (IPCSG). “Our goal is to teach men and their loved ones how to be their own case manager.” While it may not be top of mind for men,... [Read More »](#)

### California Suspends Investment Dealings with Wells Fargo Over Fraudulent Business Practices

Senator Elizabeth Warren isn’t the only public figure who is outraged by Wells Fargo’s deceptive banking practices. Today, California State Treasurer John Chiang announced that his office will place the bank on a 12-month suspension from three main



He began to wonder about what Judaism has to say about life after death, but was greeted with an uncomfortable sense of uncertainty, he says.

“I had studied world religions and I knew that there were teachings all over the world, so that motivated my thirst and both spiritual and intellectual curiosity to start studying [the topic].”

Some Jews believe in life after death, while others do not. But, Rabbi Raphael says, throughout history from the beginning of time, there has been a sense of an interconnection between this world and the world beyond.

“In the biblical period, it’s a little vague, but certainly throughout history and especially in the medieval Kabbalistic period, there is a very clear sense of continuity and of consciousness after death.”

Much of this continuity links back to the soul. Rabbi Raphael notes that the Kabbalists would say, “To understand the nature of soul and to understand what happens after death, we have to understand what it means to be alive.”

The rabbi says that while we inhabit our physical bodies, there is a feeling, a sense and a conscious acknowledgment that we are thinking. But then “there is this whole realm that we call spirituality where somehow our own individuality connects to something greater. For the Kabbalists, all of those are aspects of the soul. The soul is multi-tiered. In death, the body dies, and there is a part of our being – that animated energy – that sticks around for a while, then dissipates.”

Rabbi Raphael brings forward the idea of a “felt presence after death.” He quotes Zohar, saying, “For seven days the soul goes back and forth from its home to its grave.” There is some sort of transitional state that occurs immediately after death. It corresponds with Jewish rituals, he says, describing the tradition of walking around the block at the end of *shiva*.

“On the psycho-emotional level, it’s saying we’re returning back to our ordinary life. On the spiritual level, it’s saying to the soul, ‘We can walk you this far, but now you have to go the rest of the way on your own.’”

In his interview with Rabbi Address, Rabbi Raphael also discusses the phenomenon of the near-death experience. In such an experience, he says, people sometimes have a vision of a mythic being or go through what he calls “a life review.” Even for those who have never had a near-death experience, Rabbi Raphael encourages people to talk openly about death.

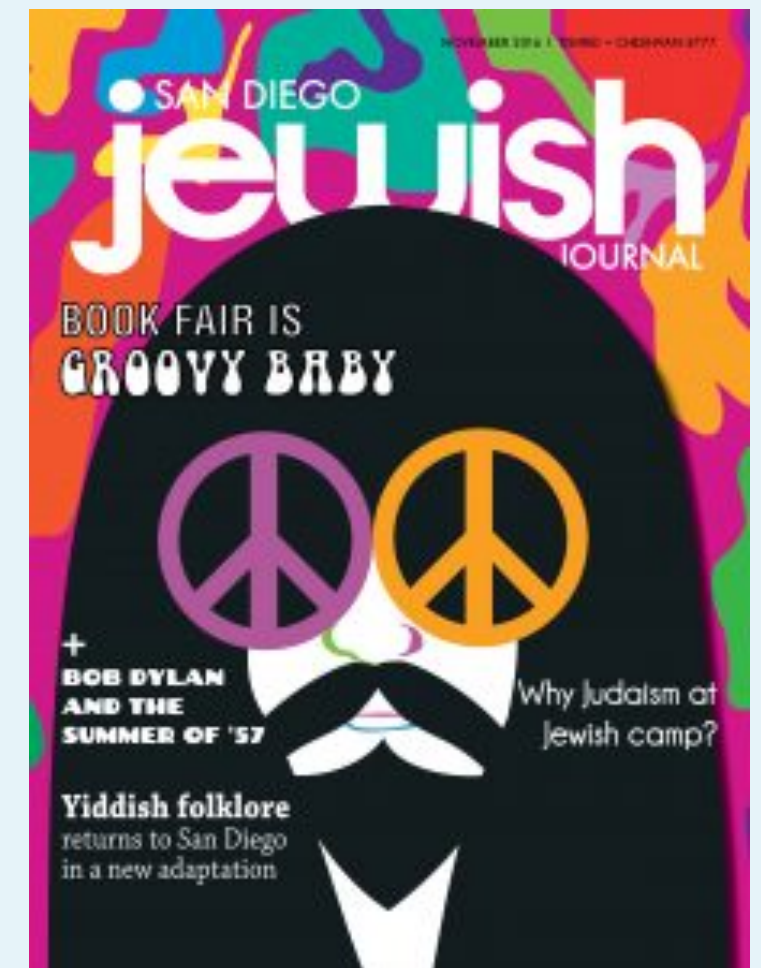
“Talk to people about their life. Help them review their life ... Letting people know that they’re not going to be alone when they

business areas of the state’s public pension funds. In a press conference held in San Francisco, where the... [Read More »](#)

### 5776: The year in review

A stabbing and car-ramming epidemic in Israel that some called a third intifada was among the most dominant Jewish stories of the past year. But 5776 was also notable for the release of spy Jonathan Pollard after 30 years in prison, the communal fallout from the Iran nuclear deal, a historic (and unfinished) agreement on egalitarian worship at the... [Read More »](#)

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die is extremely important.”

The rabbi concludes his interview with a short explanation of bereavement. He notes that it can be most difficult to sense that a relationship ceases with death.

“Someone dies, you bury their body, and in a materialistic view, they’re in the ground and there is no longer a connection.” But, he says, the connection of the heart can remain very strong.

Those who have passed, he says, will always be with us through meaningful coincidences and a continuity of consciousness. We will always remember them, and their souls will live on through us and through our experiences.

*Visit [jewishsacredaging.com](http://jewishsacredaging.com) to listen to this episode of the Sacred Aging Podcast.*

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