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(I am a citizen of the USA, and already have a Social Security number)

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE****CONGREGATIONAL EXPERIENCE**

September 2011 –  
present

**Associate Rabbi/Director of Youth, Radlett  
Reform Synagogue (3rd largest UK  
Movement for Reform Judaism  
congregation)**

Radlett, Herts

- I am privileged to fulfill the full range of rabbinic functions in this thriving and rapidly growing 860+ family congregation, including worship, education, pastoral counselling, social justice, interfaith dialogue, and youth work. Initially, my particular responsibilities focused on the younger members of the community and their families. I still oversee both formal and informal programming, supervise over 70 members of staff, including administrative staff, youth workers and teachers. Until recently, I acted as principal of our Religious School of 150 students. I prepare and oversee budgets for the youth programmes, and attend meetings of the synagogue board, executive committee, and relevant committees. As our community has grown, so have my areas of involvement, and I now am involved in all aspects of our synagogue's life, including fulfilling the role on several occasions of acting Senior Rabbi, when ours was either on Sabbatical or unfortunately on sick leave.

**Worship and Life Cycle**

- Lead worship services and offer appropriate sermons or facilitate discussions for holidays and Shabbat, including Tots, Family, Teens and Alternative services.
- Officiate at baby namings, b'nei mitzvah (including adult B'nei Mitzvah), weddings, conversions, funerals, shiva minyans and stonesettings (unveilings).
- Visit congregants in hospitals, assisted living facilities and those who cannot leave their homes.
- Created a family service model that encourages families to return month after month, and bring other family members and friends along through encouraging participants to take on key roles in the service.
- Develop alternative services to offer an opportunity to congregants to stretch their spiritual legs: creative writing service, multiplex services, pop-up services to name a few.
- Work closely with our choir and my Senior Rabbi to develop the musical culture and knowledge of the congregation.

- **Education and Social Action**

- Oversee and develop formal and informal programs for over 800 young members of the community (under 18's), to include day camps, regular group activities, Religious School, B'nei Mitzvah and leadership programs (Hadracha).
- Act as Principal for the religious school, supervise, train and support a staff of over 70 teachers and young leaders, prepare budgets, plan lessons, and organize and run special events such as FunDays.
- Redesigned, implemented and coordinated the B'nei Mitzvah preparation program to include stronger connections between the families and the synagogue and create a structure that successfully encourages post B'nei-Mitzvah members to stay involved in the community.
- Organized and led youth trips to Paris and New York in 2012, 2013, and 2014.
- Coordinate annual Mitzvah Day activities for 200 members from our community, and the local Orthodox and Chabad communities.
- Coordinated activities such as "the Greatest Chametz Bake-Off" to benefit several organizations in the broader community that support those individuals in need of help, shelter or food.
- Developed an outreach program for isolated members of the community, those who were ill or recently bereaved. This achieved not only building a bridge between those members and the community but also brought in new volunteers who were happy to sporadically give up one evening and a little extra time.

**Programming and community development:**

- Developed "Keshet," the synagogue's programming committee, and an extensive brochure, to ensure stronger, more vibrant programming and better organized activities.
- Implement processes and develop structures to support a rapidly growing congregation (approximately 10% each year).
- Organized and ran an outdoor soup kitchen in coordination with one of the local churches during Sukkot 5776.
- Visiting Rabbi at Clore Shalom, the local pluralistic day school in the Radlett area.

**Administrative and Financial:**

- Led search for religious school principal, B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator, and youth worker
- Supervised over 70 staff members of diverse ages and skills.
- Safeguarding Lead- ensuring the physical and emotional safety of each person who walks through the doors of our community.
- Manage an annual budget of £100,000

- It was an honor fulfill the full range of rabbinic functions in this historical 1000+ family congregation in Paris that is a leading community in Continental Europe, including worship, education, pastoral counselling, social justice, interfaith and intrafaith work. I worked more specifically with younger members of the community, created and oversaw both formal and informal programming, developed the French branch of Netzer Olami, the Progressive worldwide youth movement, acted as principal of a religious school with over 350 students in our primary school years and over 100 b'nei-mitzvah students, prepared and oversaw budgets, attended meetings of the synagogue board, the executive committee, and relevant committees, and served as a rabbinic mentor to one of the MJLF's satellite communities.

#### **Worship and Lifecycle:**

- Oversaw B'nei-Mitzvah Programme for over 100 students a year.
- Created family and tot services for Shabbat and festivals, including High Holy Days.
- Developed Shabbat Zimra - an innovative Erev Shabbat service that included musicians and original music, which attracted over 250 people on a monthly basis and was a first of its kind in France.
- Created a structure that enabled more of our members to feel confident and empowered to lead services, including festivals and High Holy Days.

#### **Education and Social Action:**

- Developed the French branch of Netzer Olami
- Created and ran holiday camps and trips, including Israel tours for children and teens from all of the Progressive communities in France.
- Organized and taught in the Introduction to Judaism program, as well as guided over 50 Beit Din candidates.
- Directed a Religious School with over 350 students
- Introduced a Madrich program (leadership training), to encourage post B'nei-Mitzvah students to remain involved in the community
- Co-wrote and developped "Kedma," the first Religious School curriculum specifically written for the French Progressive communities.

#### **Outreach and community:**

- Coordinated Yom Hashoah services, alongside the Memorial de la Shoah, with representatives of the Consistoire Central de France, the official French Jewish authority.
- Supported and visited the Ecole Juive Moderne, the pluralistic Jewish school in Paris.
- Founding member of Kerem, the French Progressive rabbinic association.

August 2006 – August 2007	<b>Student Rabbi, Fédération du Judaïsme Liberal and Mouvement Juif Liberal de France</b>	Lyon, France Paris, France
August 2003– August 2006	<b>Student Rabbi, West London Synagogue of British Jews</b>	London, UK

## **RELATED EXPERIENCE**

Since September 2017                      **Lecturer at the Leo Baeck College**

- Two courses in the vocational track of the rabbinic programme:
- “Celebrating festival services”
- “Officiating at lifecycle events”

Since September 2012                      **Rabbinic Tutor at the Leo Baeck College**                      London, UK

- Mentor rabbinic students
- Advise rabbinic students on career opportunities and support them through rabbinic training, as well as the first years of their careers

Since 2011                      **EUPJ (European Union for Progressive Judaism)**                      London,UK

- Founding member and treasurer of ERA, the European Progressive Rabbinic Association
- Member of the organizing committee of EUPJ rabbinic *kallot* in 2014 and 2016

April 2010                      **EUPJ Conference**                      Paris, France

- Helped organize the conference that brought together 250 Progressive Jews from Europe
- Member of the Programming committee

September 2001-May 2002                      **Junior Youth group advisor, Central Synagogue**                      New York, New York

- Developed programs and ran activities for three Junior Youth groups (3<sup>rd</sup>- 8<sup>th</sup> grades)
- Assisted the Senior Youth group advisor

Summers 2001 and 2002                      **Head Resident Advisor, URJ Kutz Camp**                      Warwick, New York

- Managed and trained a team of twenty counselors
- Oversaw the wellbeing of 200-250 program participants

## EDUCATION

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| 2003-2007   | <b>Leo Baeck College – Center for Jewish Education</b>     | London, UK                                |
| Rabbinical ordination 2007  |  |   |
| Masters of Art in Jewish Letters, 2007  |  |   |
| Rabbinical Thesis: <i>My Body, My Temple: Applying Rabbinic Approaches to Hygiene in Jewish Education</i>                               |  |   |
| 2000 - 2002   | <b>Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion</b> | New York, USA<br>and Jerusalem,<br>Israel |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rabbinical program</li></ul>  |  |   |
| 1997 - 2000   | <b>University of Geneva</b>                                | Geneva, Switzerland                       |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demi-License (BA equivalent) in History of Religions, Classical Hebrew and Philosophy</li></ul> |  |   |

## COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES AND AFFILIATION

- Central Conference of American Rabbis, member since 2009
- Volunteered with the *Restos du Coeur*, a French organization that supports homeless, vulnerably housed and lonely individuals by providing them with warm meals, support and helping them find shelter (2006-2011).
- Assembly of Rabbis, Movement for Reform Judaism UK, member since 2011, member of the executive committee and membership officer since 2017
- Kerem, French Progressive Rabbinic Association, Founding Member, 2011.
- Governor of Clore Shalom, pluralistic day school, since 2015 and chair of its Ethics and Ethos committee.
- EUPJ Rabbinic Assembly (ERA), Founding Member and Treasurer 2016-2018
- Chair of Pro-Zion/Arzenu UK, the British branch of the international organization Arzenu, since 2018
- Chair of the Joint Ethics Committee for the Reform and Liberal rabbinic associations in the UK since 2018
- Chair of the Assembly of Reform Rabbis and Cantors UK since July 2020

## PUBLICATIONS

- Siddur for religious school use
- Co-author of French Reform religious school curriculum “Kedma”

## MISCELLANEOUS

- Languages: Native fluency in English and French; Excellent command of Hebrew, good knowledge of German.
- Citizen of USA; also hold Swiss and French passports.
- Interests include reading, baking, classical music and running marathons as fundraisers

## REFERENCES

Provided upon request.

## **PERSONAL STATEMENT**

In his book *I'm God, You're Not*, Rabbi Lawrence Kushner retells a story Martin Buber told of the Baal Shem Tov:

*Once a man saw a beautiful bird high atop a tree. No one else saw it. A great longing came over him to reach the bird see it up close. But the tree was too high and there was no ladder. So he devised a plan. He persuaded people who stood there with him to form a pyramid to whose top he could climb and reach the bird. Those who helped knew nothing of the bird; they never even saw it. But the man who did see it could never have been able to reach the bird without them. Indeed had any of them left his or her place, then everyone would have fallen to the earth.*

Rabbi Kushner understands this story as a parable for congregational life: a congregation is a "human pyramid. Its goal is to raise more and more of its members high enough to reach the bird's nest."

We often place too great an importance on the goal. Yes, to have an objective and to strive for it is important. Without these, we would not learn, we would not appreciate the developments we witness on a daily basis, and we certainly would not perceive and appreciate how much we grow as individuals.

But we cannot limit the point of the story to the teaching that, as a congregation, goals are important. We do not give the Baal Shem Tov sufficient credit for the more discreet, yet even more important lesson that he gives us.

The process in which we engage, the journey we take to achieve our set objectives, deserve even more focus, for that is what builds us, and makes us stronger, better people and more empowered Jews.

The pyramid is the core of the story: why we build it and what we achieve when we have built it is not nearly as important as simply building it. In order for it to be strong, thought needs to have gone into its architecture: who are the people best suited to support the base, who are those who will be most useful on top? Is anyone feeling hurt or disgruntled by their assignment, is each individual feeling respected and included, and not simply used for what others perceive they can offer?

Only when these questions are answered can the pyramid be successfully built, in a collegial and trusting atmosphere. It is not an easy process, arguing may well ensue, and part of the challenge lies in the manner in which these potential disagreements might be resolved. That being said, each member of the pyramid also needs to be conscious of their own limitations and

be prepared to take on a different role than the one originally anticipated; and this means that others will have to roll up their sleeves and step up to the plate.

The pyramid is metaphor for my understanding of a strong, healthy and vibrant congregation.

I have been fortunate to be involved with two large communities, in Paris and greater London, that strived to involve as many individuals as possible in community life; the leadership did not lie with one small group and the programming did not depend on the goodwill of a few. As a rabbi serving communities that embrace that model, it is my responsibility to get to know as many of our members as possible, to listen to them, to hear, appreciate and understand what they are asking for, and support them in their efforts to contribute.

For each of the communities, the challenge was different: in Paris, I was tasked with helping a community engage in a process of healing and recovery, and we indeed went from strength to strength, rebuilding the trust that had been broken, engaging and inviting in new members to the point where we found ourselves struggling to fit everyone in at the close of Yom Kippur.

The congregation I currently serve in the UK faces a different struggle- we are growing, too fast some might say, and some of our longstanding members struggle with the changes that growth brings. In both situations, as different as they are, I see that being able to apply the model of the pyramid made, and makes, the difference.

Using the tools of my profession, I engage in this form of outreach every day: services, lifecycle events, classes, attempting to call each of our members before the High Holy Days, handwritten thank-you notes, even encounters in the supermarket become a shared experience upon which I can build and/or strengthen a relationship with a particular congregant.

There is one reality about the pyramid described by the Baal Shem Tov which is hard to ignore, especially in these times: the pyramid is built outside, is exposed to the elements and is therefore fragile and vulnerable. As my community in London faced the challenges presented by the pandemic, I realized that despite the fear, the sadness, the anxieties, the anger, the frustrations my congregants and myself are experiencing, our vision has not changed and my role as rabbi has remained the same. My personal challenge has been to learn how to lead and accompany my congregation as we adapt our pyramid, as we strive to achieve our vision.

I miss in-person interactions with congregants; these special, sacred moments are what I most appreciate about the role I am privileged to hold. While it is hard at the moment to have a clear understanding of what lies ahead, I know that I will carry with me the lessons I have

learned from being a rabbi during this pandemic, and look forward to drawing upon these experiences to strengthen my rabbinate.

One of my favorite Hebrew words is קדוש *Kadosh*, because of its meaning- while it is usually translated as “holy” or “sacred”, it first means “distinct”, “separate” or “unique”. Building a pyramid, growing a community is *kadosh*- it is an act that brings together a group of people with a shared purpose and a shared vision that only they can experience in a unique way. And as a rabbi, it is my privilege to be a part of that journey, of that sacred act.