

# WHY JEWISH LIVING?

Five years ago, before the search for roots became fashionable, I took a yearlong trip to Europe. I was young, and full of the need to find out who I was and where I'd come from. I rented a car in Paris and drove 10,000 miles, stopping at the towns and villages where my relatives had lived, and the concentration camps where they had died. Looking for my great-grandmother's grave in Ciechanow, Poland, I found a road over the site of the cemetery—a road paved with tombstones. In East Berlin, I went to a synagogue service for Shabbat Chanukah; there were five people in the shul, four of whom were Jewish. On a winter morning when the air was damp and heavy, I stood in the *Appellplatz* at Auschwitz and put on tefillin. At that moment, looking around at the blind boxlike dormitories and the rusted barbed wire, I knew that my life could no longer be the same. I knew I had to do my share to help assure that the Jewish way of life sacred to the camp's victims would not have vanished with them in the ovens' smoke.

For centuries, that way of life had enriched humanity with its profound moral and intellectual treasures. It had enriched countless Jewish lives with its beautiful rites and bittersweet legends, its awesome holy days and joyous celebrations. Now, I realized, that way of life needed a medium to help it flourish. The Jewish people needed a forum for communication, a vehicle for cultural self-expression. One free of organizational ties, of the splintering of sectarianism. One that would speak to all Jews, of all Jews, for all Jews everywhere.

Three years later, *JEWISH LIVING* was born. Its reception in 500,000 Jewish homes was overwhelming, and confirmed my belief that a Jewish family magazine, one that could deal with both lifestyle and substantive issues, was sorely needed. The most frequent comment: "It's about time!"

This issue has special meaning for me: it coincides with the 40th anniversary of the outbreak of World War II. On September 1, 1939, Hitler attacked Poland. It was the beginning of the end for six million Jews. Here in America, though, most of us didn't know what was happening to our brethren.

I remember as a teenager watching a television documentary with my parents. At one point the screen glared suddenly with the image of a harsh, snow-covered mountain in Siberia, and my father remarked that on such and such a date he had climbed that mountain while fleeing for his life. My

mother, looking strangely at him, said that the date was familiar; she went off to check an old diary and came back with confirmation. On the very day that my father, ragged, hungry, and feverish, had climbed that Siberian peak, my mother, here in blissfully ignorant New York, had been a bridesmaid at her cousin's wedding.

I offer this story to explain why this issue of *JEWISH LIVING* features photos smuggled out of Soviet Russia. This time, all of us will know what is happening. These Jewish refuseniks have names, faces. Look at them: these are faces like the faces of your relatives and friends.

This is also our High Holy Day issue. In his essay "Plays of Awe," Dr. Irving Greenberg explores the challenge these holy days present, to know oneself and to find rebirth. And though each of us must find it in his own way, rebirth is built into the Jewish year: the solemn self-questioning of Yom Kippur is followed by the joy of Sukkot and the sublime riot of Simchat Torah.

*JEWISH LIVING*, reflecting this tremendous emotional range of Jewish life, has its lighter moments too. Moments devoted to travels and novels, to songs and short stories, to picnics and personalities, to cooking and sukkah-building. This issue even takes a gossipy peek into the bankbooks of America's richest Jews—indulging a fascination with the rich and powerful that most of us share. And this issue announces the results of a kugel contest that flooded our editorial offices with joyful calories. (You'll note that our next contest is for sukkahs—we won't have to eat anything.)

Bringing *JEWISH LIVING* to life hasn't been my dream alone. It's needed the diligence and dedication of a magnificent, idealistic young staff—I can't thank them enough. We've had growing support from many major Jewish organizations, whose leaders now recognize the importance of the major media in presenting Jewish values. Most important, we've received your support—through letters, word of mouth, and subscriptions. We hope you'll continue your support. We're all in this together—each one of us has a share in Jewish living. It should be fun. And with any luck, it will make a difference in our lives.

Best wishes for a happy New Year. טובה שנה טובה

New York

August 24, 1979

Rosh Chodesh Elul 5739

  
L. Aryeh Rubin  
Editor and Publisher

*JEWISH LIVING* (ISSN 0194-6250) is published bimonthly by Adar Communications Company, 122 East 42nd Street, New York, NY 10017. Copyright © 1979 by Adar Communications Company. Controlled circulation paid at Washington, D.C. Postmaster, Please send form 3579 to *JEWISH LIVING*, GPO Box 1859, New York, NY 10001. SUBSCRIPTIONS: U.S. and Possessions, \$18 for nine issues. Other countries add \$3 for each subscription. Single copy price, \$2. Address all subscription communications to *JEWISH LIVING*, Subscription Dept., GPO Box 1859, New York, NY 10001. Editorial and advertising offices, 122 East 42nd Street, New York, NY 10017 (212) 687-3090. Unsolicited manuscripts, photographs and proposals will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

As an assurance to subscribers of *JEWISH LIVING*, each Class B Limited Partner of the publisher, Adar Communications Company, a New York Limited Partnership, has agreed to guarantee in accordance with the Partnership agreement, a portion of the publisher's obligation to refund unfulfilled subscriptions for at least four years.