

## Koli Kulanu blog post 1-1-19

### Sacred

I am fortunate to have not one but two soul-mates. My wonderful spouse Annette, of course, is one, and I am thankful for her. My other soul-mate is my dear friend, also named Marc. He jokes that we were “womb-mates” because our mothers were friends while pregnant with us. That’s how far back we go. We met as young playmates, became good friends at age 8 in Hebrew school and Temple youth group, went to high school together, were roommates in graduate school, and have been close ever since. He proposed marriage to his (now) wife while driving on the New Jersey Turnpike on the way home from our wedding!

Annette and I visited Marc and his spouse Karen a couple of weeks ago at their lovely home in Miami Beach. Our connections go so broad and so deep. For example, Marc’s grandfather was a prominent Orthodox rabbi, Karen was the president of their Temple, and they spend time and effort connecting deeply with Israel and their Jewish heritage. And we don’t talk just about Jewish stuff, we connect on many levels and interests. So we love getting together!

Marc recommended to me a book by Rabbi Arthur Green, [Judaism’s Ten Best Ideas](#). This is a ‘basics’ book, intended for those who are new to Judaism or who are starting their learning about Judaism. I have a similar book that I recommend to ‘newish’ Jewish people: Dennis Prager and Joseph Telushkin’s [Nine Questions People Ask About Judaism](#). OK, so I’m a sucker for lists! Whatever point you are at on your Jewish journey, I recommend these books. Both are insightful and thought-provoking. And I recommend that you give these books to people you know that may be curious about what it means to be Jewish, and why bother.

One of Rabbi Green’s 10 best [ideas](#) is a chapter called “*L’Hayyim – To Life: Accepting Death, Affirming Life.*” I loved this chapter, and can imagine a future adult education class devoted to it, including studying his [sources](#). Among the key points Rabbi Green makes is that when we live a Jewishly-influenced life, we go out of our way to make life sacred. It’s pretty well known that we Jews make key moments sacred, such as having a *bar/bat mitzvah* or saying *kiddush* on a Friday evening. Making life sacred means that every day, many times a day, we can choose to make a moment sacred. When we awaken. When we eat. When we relate to our spouse and children. When we interact with our co-workers. When we choose how to spend our leisure time. When we choose how to spend our money. When we go to sleep.

Rabbi Green brings forward the Hebrew word for sacred, Hebrew root *k-d-sh*, to make his point about making life sacred. It’s a similar point to one made by Rabbi Ed Feinstein (he was a camp counselor at Camp Ramah in California when I was a young camper there) in a Yom Kippur [sermon](#). *Kadosh/Kedushah* (sacred/holiness), *Kaddish* (prayer of mourners and at many other times), *Kiddushin* (marriage vows), all have to do with treasuring life as part of a community of people.

Those are two key points: first, that a primary goal of Judaism is to treasure life (*kadosh*), and second, that it’s not just an individual spiritual thing, not me thinking elevated thoughts. It’s us, a community, interacting with each other (*kehillah*).

We at Kol Shalom are a *kehillah k’dosha*, a sacred community. We treasure each other, and we treasure our community, our *kehillah*. Each of us has a role to play. My #1 goal as a lay leader is for our

congregation to help every Kol Shalom member along in their Jewish journey. I have my own journey, and it takes thought and reading and remembering and effort, and all of it is a joy. I want Kol Shalom to help you on your journey.

How do we make choices in our own lives to add sacredness in our daily/weekly routines? How can we take steps to help our children, our congregants, to feel deeply connected with our Jewish heritage?

I want to be in dialogue with you. You can click [here](#) to send me a message, or you can email me at [mplieber@ymail.com](mailto:mplieber@ymail.com). I am thrilled to hear from you, to get to know you better, and to hear your suggestions on continuing Kol Shalom's growth and value to you.

Thank you for your help and for your part in our *kehillah k'dosha*, our sacred community!

Marc Lieber, President