A Jewish Response to #MeToo: Mensch Up!

BY SUZANNE AMOR & HANNAH TRUMBULL

Over the past year the #MeToo movement has given important visibility to the alarming prevalence of gender-based violence. Starting with the exposure of workplace sexual harassment in Hollywood, #MeToo has become a nationwide sharing of stories of survivorship, allyship and healing. Those stories are emerging not only in Hollywood and major public institutions, but in the supposedly sacred arena of our Jewish communal spaces. That makes this a very Jewish, very relevant, very close-to-home issue.

While the enraged volume of stories of violence against women is not new (we at Shalom Bayit have heard these stories daily for 26 years), what is new is the number of survivors speaking out, and the fact that we’ve seen true listening, believing and action in response.

So what does a Jewish response to #MeToo look like? For men in our community, #MeToo has raised a wide range of questions and perspectives: outrage, confusion, defensiveness, a passionate desire to create change. We’re hearing “I want to do something now!”, “I’m afraid to talk to women” and “I am no Harvey Weinstein, but what is my role in this? How can I help?” For men who are ready to take action, Shalom Bayit has a new program just for you. We believe a key Jewish response to #MeToo is for men to Mensch Up. To prevent the next generation of #MeToo, we need men’s allyship and commitment to changing the culture of violence, starting with internal reflection and leading to community advocacy. That’s why in May at our annual Creating Hope dinner, we made a public call for Jewish action—not to “Man Up!” but to “Mensch Up!”

Beginning in childhood, boys are often punished for behavior that doesn’t match society’s definitions of masculinity. “Man up!” “Stop being a sissy!” “Real men don’t cry!” We discourage too much emotion, nurturing or empathy. Boys are punished if they cry, show vulnerability, dress or act in ways considered traditionally feminine. This “man up” cultural limitation of boys’ and men’s emotional expression has ramifications for everyone. Men who grow up with restricted ideas of masculinity have a harder time taking care of their own emotional needs, which is unjustly harmful to men. This rigid view of masculinity is also one of the roots of violence against women. We teach boys that to be successful as a man they must be powerful, aggressive, and in control of others—particularly women. In heterosexual relationships, intimate partner abuse is notably gendered: 95% of domestic violence is perpetrated by men. Jewish or not, 1 in 4 women will be abused by an intimate partner in her lifetime and 1 in 3 will experience sexual violence.

RABBIS’ CORNER: PARENTING TO PREVENT #MeToo

BY RABBI CARLA FENYES, CONGREGATION EMANU-EL

This past May Shalom Bayit taught a workshop to our parents on Preventing the Next Generation of #MeToo. The clergy reached out to Shalom Bayit because we were hearing from a lot of our parents that they felt unprepared to engage in many of the issues that had arisen in the media this year. We wanted to do something right away that would give parents concrete tools for preventing abuse.

The workshop attracted a diverse group of twenty-five parents with children and grandchildren ranging in age from preschool to high school. Naomi and Zephira packed the two hours with conversations about healthy relationships, what we want our kids to learn about consent, and the role of societal gender norms.

We received glowing feedback from the participants. I received five emails in the subsequent week with requests that we invite Shalom Bayit back for more parent workshops. I have heard several participants sharing what they learned with friends in the community. The event exceeded our expectations. We feel so fortunate to have Shalom Bayit as a resource in our community, now more than ever.

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So how can men “Mensch up”? The Yiddish word mensch is traditionally a gender neutral term for a person who approaches the world with integrity, accountability, and honor. Mensch has often been used to speak of men who are leaders in their communities — but has never been defined with any expectation of how that leader treats the women in their lives. We call on our Jewish community to redefine mensch to include one’s private as well as public behavior. A mensch must model integrity not only in the public sphere, but also in every concentric circle of their life: their workplaces, homes, and families. A mensch treats their spouse, will in turn empower all people to have healthier relationships. According to Jewish sociologist Dr. Michael Kimmel, “couples who have more gender equity in their relationship were less likely to see a therapist, less likely to be diagnosed with depression, less likely to be taking prescription medications, and more likely to report marital satisfaction.” Not only can increasing gender equity in our relationships help end domestic violence, it also can also help us achieve the quintessential Jewish value of shalom bayit (peace in the home).

Judaism teaches the importance of bechira chofshe (free-will) and tikkun olam (world-healing). It is in each of our power to make choices that either empower or oppress others. In Pirkei Avot, ancient rabbinic writings on essential ethical principles, Rabbi Ben Zoma says: “Who is the mighty one? He who conquers his impulse, as it says [in Proverbs 16:32]. ‘slowness to anger is better than a mighty person and the ruler of his spirit than the conqueror of a city.” Rabbi Ben Zoma is making the case to redefine strength from a Jewish perspective as control over ourselves, rather than control of others.

Redefining masculinity. Mensching Up is certainly also about treating your partners with respect. That alone, however, is no longer enough. Jewish domestic violence prevention scholar Dr. Jackson Katz writes that “not committing sexual assault or harassment is way too low a bar for what it takes to be a good guy. Women’s leadership has been incredible and transformative but the missing piece is men’s leadership.”

We call on fathers, uncles, coaches, teachers, rabbis and community members to help us shift the communal dialogue to model a healthy Jewish masculinity. We must raise boys who cry openly, share willingly, and love empathetically. We must teach them to respect women, to ask for consent, to honor boundaries, to use their power responsibly, and to resolve conflicts peacefully. This reimagining of traditional ideas of masculinity may feel challenging at times. But Mensching Up means sitting with your own discomfort instead of passing unhealthy ideas about gender and power on to a new generation.

We want to support Jewish men to have conversations with each other about healthy Jewish masculinity and gender expression. This will in turn empower all people to have healthier relationships. According to Jewish sociologist Dr. Michael Kimmel, “couples who have more gender equity in their relationship were less likely to see a therapist, less likely to be diagnosed with depression, less likely to be taking prescription medications, and more likely to report marital satisfaction.” Not only can increasing gender equity in our relationships help end domestic violence, it also can also help us achieve the quintessential Jewish value of shalom bayit (peace in the home).

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WE WERE INSPIRED TO SEE OVER 330 PEOPLE AT CREATING HOPE: MENSCH UP, SHALOM BAYITS 26TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION AND BENEFIT. On May 3rd we gathered at the JCC in San Francisco to stand up for women’s safety and bring attention to ways we can prevent abuse before it starts. It was a fabulous, fun and festive celebration of Shalom Bayit’s work – and the crowd was fired up to Mensch Up and stop violence against women in its tracks. THANK YOU to all of our attendees, sponsors, hosts, honorary committee members, our tireless event committee and our wonderful chairs Tom & Kendra Kasten for making the evening possible. You all helped us raise over $260,000 to strengthen Shalom Bayit’s services, expand our prevention efforts and help launch new #MenschUp educational programs for men. It is both this generous financial support, and your individual actions to stand up to abuse, that will help us build a Jewish #MeToo response. **WE ARE SO GRATEFUL TO ALL OF YOU.**
Thank you to our supporters!

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Rabbi Debbie Israel / Cong. Emeth
Rabbi Margie Jacobs & Family
Bob Jaffe
Ruth Jaffe
JYCA
Lisa & Alon Kama
Kitty Kameon
Marcy Kates
Channah Katz
Gary & Ilene Katz
Rabbi Stuart & Vicki Kelman
C.J. Kingsley
Barbara Kirsch
Linda & Bob Kiss
Inna Klai
Jill Kneeter & Rabbi Edward Zenin
Joan Korin & Ronn Berrol
Sergey Koyzman & Victoria Ivanova
Barbara Kraus & John Benesch

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Thank You to Our VOLUNTEERS

Judy Bloom  |  Angela Braverman  |  Marilyn Dobbs-Higuera  |  Shannon Edelstone  
Roger Friedberger  |  Madalyn Friedman  |  Lucy Gold  |  Sofie Goldberg  
Deborah Guckenheimer  |  Corinne Jaffe-Gellman  |  Lisa & Alan Kama  |  Laura Katz  
Corinne Levy  |  Amanda Marcovitch  |  Talya & Paul Marcus  |  June Marinoff  
Julia Nierenberg  |  Joanne Neuman  |  Joel Siegel  |  Austin Weissgrau

Thank You

תודה רבה

to the many individuals, foundations, businesses & organizations who make our programs a success. We couldn’t do this without you!  
Any omissions are unintentional.
In-kind & financial contributions are fully tax deductible!
Please send your gift to: Shalom Bayit / Tides Center  
PO Box 2883 | Berkeley, CA 94702
or donate securely online: www.shalom-bayit.org
HONORARY AND MEMORIAL GIFTS JULY 2017 - JUNE 2018

IN HONOR OF...

Meira Albert: Brian & Fran Kaye | Jerry Yanowitz & Suzanne D’Arcy
Don Allen’s birthday: Merrylen Sacks & Bruce Irvine
Suzanne Amor: Michele Ban | Roxanne Kaplan | Deanne Recht
Rabbi Camille Angel: Rabbi Danny Gottlieb
Rosyland & Bob Bauer: Renee Bauer & Laurie Zimmerman
Sheila & Philip Faillace
Ellen & Jon Benjamin: Kate Loring & Bob Benjamin | Diane & Jerry Spagnoli
Michael Bloom: Women of Isaiah
Ellen Bob & David Waksberg: Norman Schlossberg
Sue Bojdak: Nancy Kaufman-Cohen
Sarah & Mike Brandall: Ricki L. Oleon
Rebekah Bravmann’s bat mitzvah: Joan Diengott
Sally Brown: Judith & Harry Radousky
Jim & Linda Cantrell: Sandra Lipkowitz
Jordan Carey: Amy Liza Schoenblum & Jonathan Carey
Zephyra Derblich-Milea: Rabbi David Cooper | Ruth Derblich, z’l
Ruth Diengott: Joan Diengott
Susan Epstein: Marcy Kates
Dianne Fohrman: Susan & Rabbi Gordon Freeman
Jerilyn Gelt: Becky & Daniel Buckwald | Bonnie & Daniel Levitt
Rita R. Semel
Phylis Godlove: Joyce & David Lewbin
Joe Goldman: Jacquelyn Goldman
Rivka Greenberg: Kathy Khuner & Theda Haber
Judith Kunofsky & Mitchell Shandling
Cantor Elaya Jenkins-Adelberg’s ordination: Luanne Jenkins & Jody Adelberg
Linda & Tom Kalinowski: Wilma & Tony Bass | Becky & Daniel Buckwald
Miriam & Jerry Butrimovitz | Helene & Larry Edelman
Linda & Frank Kurtz | Abby Leibman
Linda & Christian Peacock | Kitty & Harvey Rudman
Kelley & David Weil | Rochelle Weil
Tom & Kendra Kasten: Julius Aires | Rosemary Barlow | Cathy & Tom Brown
David Kremer & Maria Miller | Mara & David Langer
Laura & Gary Lauder | Laurie & Larry May
Susan & Alan Rothenberg | Amy Rabbino & Neil Rubin
David Saxe | Lorna Siepser & Steve Klebe
Robert & Murray Zucker
Danny Kaufman’s bar mitzvah: Anne Schmitz & Aaron Kaufman

Kathy Khuner & Theda Haber: Harriet Palk
Pam Kramer: Donita Decker
Linda Kurtz: Linda Wertheim
Arik Labowitz: Anonymous
Stephanie Levin: Shari & Evan Rick
Stacey & Evan Levy: Gwynne & Michael Karchem | Ardith & Michael Plimack
Debbie & Dave Rosenberg
Evan, Ardith & Gwynne: Mark Battat
Sandra Lipkowitz: David & Ellen Newman | Ellen & Jon Benjamin
Patsy Lurie: Julie & David Levine | Meg Schultz
Dean MacDonald: Rabbi Batshir Torchio
Rabbi Jackie Mates-Muchin: Sherri Richards & Tom Flynn
The Oakland Well Circle Ladies: Samantha Zellman
Noa Oberman: Lawrence Marshall
Ruth Oppenheimer: Sarah Tunik & Dan Oppenheimer
Lindy Passer: Barry & Debbie Cohn
Jan Reicher’s leadership: Rhona Edelbaum & Dr. Steven Sloan
Barbara Rosenberg’s birthday: Linda & Eli Frank
Norma Jean Rosse: Sarah Persitz
Leslie Rothbach: Kati Goodman | Bonnie Kellogg
Michael & Maureen Samson: Rhona Edelbaum & Dr. Steven Sloan
Shira Stanton Sebestyen: Rivka Greenberg
The Shalom Bayit staff: Art & Sheila Braufman | Rabbi Natan Fenner
Rivka Greenberg | Rabbi Jacqueline Mates-Muchin
Joanne & Gary Neuman | Lauren & Eric Schlezing
Sophia Smulewitz’s Bat Mitzvah: Valerie Curtis, Naomi & Anya Tucker
Roselyne C Swig: Valli Benesch & Bob Tandler
Kate Taffel: Lora Brosbe
Jasmine Tarkoff’s birthday: Dvora & Eric Citron
Claire Taylor’s bat mitzvah: Priscilla Adler
Abby Teisch: Fran & Joel Teisch
Naomi Tucker & family: Linda & David Altshuler | Terry Pink Alexander
Sharna Chaiken & Pam Morgan | Ruth Jaffe
Patti Joselewitz | Maria Kaufman | Janet Schneider
Bracha & Don Stone | Janet Surkin & Bob Stillman
Harriet Tucker | Diane & Josh Wisschraftler
Ruhmah Weil: Linda & Tom Kalinowski
Christina Woo: Suzanne Sims Woo
Steve Zolno: Rivka Greenberg

In honor of Nancy Zorfas’ birthday: Debra Herz | Marlene Hopper

IN MEMORY OF...

Andi Arrick: Rochelle Weil
Sam Barkin: Jan & Jim Schmuckler
Gil Bendix: Rivka Greenberg
Jonathan Bernbaum: Diane & Ed Bernbaum
Bonnie Boren’s mother: Sandra Lipkowitz
Abraham Brodsky: Rabbi Steven & Leona Chester
Edwin Cohen: David Cohen
Rita Cook: Benjamin Cook
Linda Dannenberg: Diane Claerbout
Deborah Edelman: Laura Katz | Barry Zimmerman
Lucy Feld: Cantor Roslyn Barak
In memory of her sister Sylvia: Helen Field
Esther Franco: Sandra Lipkowitz
Art Gauss: Sandra Lipkowitz
Erica Goldberg: The Honorable Eugene Hyman
Robert A. Goldstein: Anna Mantell
Jonathan Harms: Celia & Terry Harms | Ron & Stacy Kahn
Fran Katz: Phyllis Brown
Hilda Kline: Marilyn Kline
Gina Klonoff: Ruth Diengott
Linda Kramer: Gilbert Bodin
Joanne Lerven Lerner: Hank Lerner
Jane Marcus: Barbara Kirsch
Dossie Marinoff: Valerie Curtis, Naomi & Anya Tucker
Iris Merrick: Rabbi Meirah Ilinsky
Miriam “Marian” Newman: Sandra Lipkowitz
Linda Peacock’s father: Rochelle Weil
Vicky Prager: Alex Madonik & Eve Sweetser
Ramona: Lori Wick
Professor Patty Rauch-Neustadt: The Honorable Eugene Hyman
Clara and Kathe Rogers: Rivka Greenberg
Her parents: Rabbi Sarayeh Schley
Adrienne Segol: Martin Segol
Lois Siegel: Celia Concus | Judith & Harry Radousky | Joel Siegel
Milton Sigberman: Maxene Bodin
Orna Jane Sorokin: Iris Sorokin
Arthur Sussman: Jo & Jeff Illfeld | Dr. Rita Sussman
Alexandra Sweitzer: The Brodsky Family | Barbara & Bob Morrison
Janet Weisberg’s mother: Sandra Lipkowitz

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ANNOUNCEMENTS & PROGRAMS

Passing the Board Baton: Thank you to Linda Kalinowski

Words cannot begin to express the depths of our gratitude to Shalom Bayit’s longtime friend and staunch advocate, our Board Chair Linda Kalinowski. Linda has served on our board since 2011 and is now in her fourth year as Board Chair. But her involvement with Shalom Bayit stretches back to the 1990s, when she joined us on the front lines of raising the issue of domestic violence in the Jewish community. Linda has helped strengthen Shalom Bayit for over 20 years. As Board Chair she has shepherded us through a significant period of growth and change — building a strong Board of Directors, doubling our fundraising and budget, and launching a new strategic vision for Shalom Bayit’s future. A model ambassador, Linda proudly talks about domestic violence and Shalom Bayit everywhere she goes, never missing an opportunity to let people know why this issue is so important. The Board and Staff are grateful for Linda’s leadership, vision, and tireless commitment to the work of protecting and empowering women. This fall, Linda will pass the leadership baton to incoming Board Chair Jerilyn Gelt, who herself brings a wealth of leadership experience to this role. We are thankful that Linda will remain on the Board as past chair, continuing to impart her wisdom and enthusiasm—but we all hope she’ll enjoy a little more free time now. Toda raba to Linda, and welcome Jerilyn!

Introducing

СВОБОДА

FREEDOM

Russian language services now available:
- domestic violence counseling
- community education for the Russian-speaking Jewish community

Helpline:
(866) SHALOM-7
Get involved:
russianoutreach@shalom-bayit.org

Funding generously provided by:
Berkeley Jewish Giving Circle
Koum Family Foundation
Mount Zion Health Fund
Walter & Elise Haas Fund

Join Us

May Our Homes be a Shelter of Peace
Gathering in the Sukkah & Annual Prayer for Peace in the Home

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 27TH
5:30-7:30 PM
AT A PRIVATE HOME IN MARIN

Sukkot celebrates shelter and safety, and falls this year just before October, which is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. We tie purple ribbons on our Sukkah to mark this national reflection, to honor survivors of abuse, and to note our commitment to making every home a safe home.

CELEBRATE SUKKOT | ENJOY REFRESHMENTS
HONOR SURVIVORS | TIE A PURPLE RIBBON
BE IN COMMUNITY

RSVP:
For more information, accessibility details and address please call (510) 845-8874 or email us at events@shalom-bayit.org

Get Involved with Shalom Bayit

Volunteers are the backbone of our community impact—you can make a difference!

Join a Leadership Group:
- East Bay Ambassadors Outreach
- 27th Anniversary Event Committee
- Russian Advisory Group
- Fundraising or Finance Committee

Be the Link! Invite Shalom Bayit to:
- Host a men’s MenschUp! conversation
- Speak to a gathering of friends in your home
- Bring our Love Shouldn’t Hurt youth workshop to your school or synagogue

Ask about joining our growing Board of Directors!

Let us know how you’d like to get involved—fill out a volunteer application on our website or call for more info.