



# ***ISRAEL MATTERS!***

Publication of the Israel Affairs Committee of Temple Beth Shalom  
1809 Whitney Avenue, Hamden, CT 06517-1401



Issue Number 122  
April 2018

## **A Dispatch from Tel Aviv — The 2018 Jewish Funders Network International Conference**

During the period March 11-15, 586 donors from 12 countries have come together for express purpose of taking Jewish and Israeli philanthropy to new levels of effectiveness. The conference rotates year to year — west coast to east coast to Israel, year the conference will be held in San Francisco.

The core purposes of the annual conference are to connect, learn, and partner: connect by reaching out beyond a donor's usual social and professional circles to discover new philanthropic opportunities, learn from each other and from experts in philanthropy, investment, and Israel's complicated domestic scene and an even more complex regional environment in order to better target philanthropic giving; and through active networking to partner in ways that leverage each other's capabilities, missions and resources.

The JFN idea is that through new contacts, increased knowledge and creative partnerships, the Jewish giving community can better help strengthen Jewish identity, build greater Jewish unity, and create a better future through a host of philanthropic fields ranging from health and Jewish education to social welfare and cultural vitality, from advancing economic opportunity among disadvantaged Israelis to interfaith bridge building, from collaborative leadership training to service programs designed to help young people cultivate their growth and potential, and from helping the Israeli Arab community to building a more vibrant Jewish life.

For the purpose of this month's TBS newsletter, I can only provide two snapshots of program sessions that I found worthy of sharing.

First, Israel's Ultra-Orthodox Population: officials and Israeli professional analysts often discuss the Israeli population in terms of being comprised of "four tribes." fact, when Israel's President Reuben Rivlin addressed our group, he specifically referred to "the four tribes of Israel:" the ultra-Orthodox, the modern Orthodox, the Secular, and Israeli Arabs. 's Ultra-Orthodox complex and diverse has just surpassed the one million mark. project that by 2065, this tribe will make up a third of the country and 40% of its Jewish community. delicate

balance and compromises needed at the time of the creation of the State of Israel created unintended consequences that have rendered non-Ultra-Orthodox Jewish practices unequal under the law. a combination of engagement, activism and advocacy, Jews in Israel are challenging the legal hegemony of the Ultra-Orthodox establishment on prayer, marriage, conversion and more. The conference explored the current reality and discussed various strategies to find a greater degree of understanding and harmony.

It was also interesting to note that more and more Ultra-Orthodox men are blending traditional Talmudic learning with western education, particularly in high technology fields in order to enter the work force and provide a higher standard of living for their families. , about one-third of Ultra-Orthodox men are now accepting military service. was also noted that self-segregation of the Ultra-Orthodox continues to create varying levels of tension within the confines of this very fragmented society — among factions of the Hasidic, Ashkenazi, Sephardic, and Lithuanian Ultra-Orthodox. continues to be a significant problem, although not quite as severe as in years past. , the birthrate of Ultra-Orthodox women continues to be three times that of their secular counterparts, a limiting factor on the economic well-being of this large and rapidly growing community.

Second, "50 Shades of Blue, The Rise of Israeli Judaism." life in Israel is often depicted as two competing opposites: religious versus secular. fact, there is far more nuanced Jewish life than just conflicts over buses, beaches and conversions. seems to be vibrant and varied Jewish experiences and lifestyles available and being used, from secular Jews exploring Jewish text and values, to online and pluralistic Jewish text study, and a dozen or more variations of this search for values, understanding, and absorption. conclusion offered in the session was that there is a growing grassroots movement of Israeli Judaism offering new meaning to tens of thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands Israelis. emerging picture is an Israel with a more pluralistic Judaism than one sees at first or even second glance.

Reporting from Tel Aviv on March 15<sup>th</sup>, Allan Myer.