

Adult Rated Judaism

“Jews by Choice,” those who have converted to Judaism, hold a big advantage over us “Jews by Chance,” those born into the tradition. You see, Jews by Choice have the wonderful opportunity to study Judaism as adults while the rest of us have most likely only studied until the ripe old age of 13, or, if we were really interested (or our parents really insistent) to the riper old age of 16. No wonder so many of us come away with the idea that Judaism (or religion in general) is childish; after all, what do we mean by childish if not something that only children learn.

I hope it will not surprise you to learn that there is nothing childish about Judaism. Our people and religion have not survived some four thousand years by being superficial and simplistic. Judaism is a deep fountain of education, knowledge, spirit, song, food and tradition that nourishes us throughout our lives. As one of my teachers explained, the problem is not learning about or mastering Judaism, the problem is life and living. It is common to belittle religion by calling it a crutch but I would not quibble with this description. A crutch is a wonderful thing to have when you’ve got a serious problem with your leg and religion is a wonderful thing to have to help you deal with the problems of life. And everyone has problems with life. As Helen Telushkin, late mother of Rabbi Joseph Telushkin put it: “the only people I know who are perfectly happy (who have no problems) are people I don’t know very well.”

So I invite you to discover the deeper elements in Judaism, the things you never learned in Hebrew School. On a flyer in this month’s Megillah you will find a description of two courses that will be offered over the next 25 weeks, “A Taste of Judaism” and “Jewish Literacy.” Beyond this, we have a weekly “Lunch and Learn” class every Thursday afternoon from 12:30PM to 2:00PM and Torah Study on most Saturday mornings (see the calendar for details as well).

Most of us yearn for a relationship with God but a relationship is a two way street. When we pray, we speak to God; when we study, God speaks to us. Come and join in on the rest of the conversation.