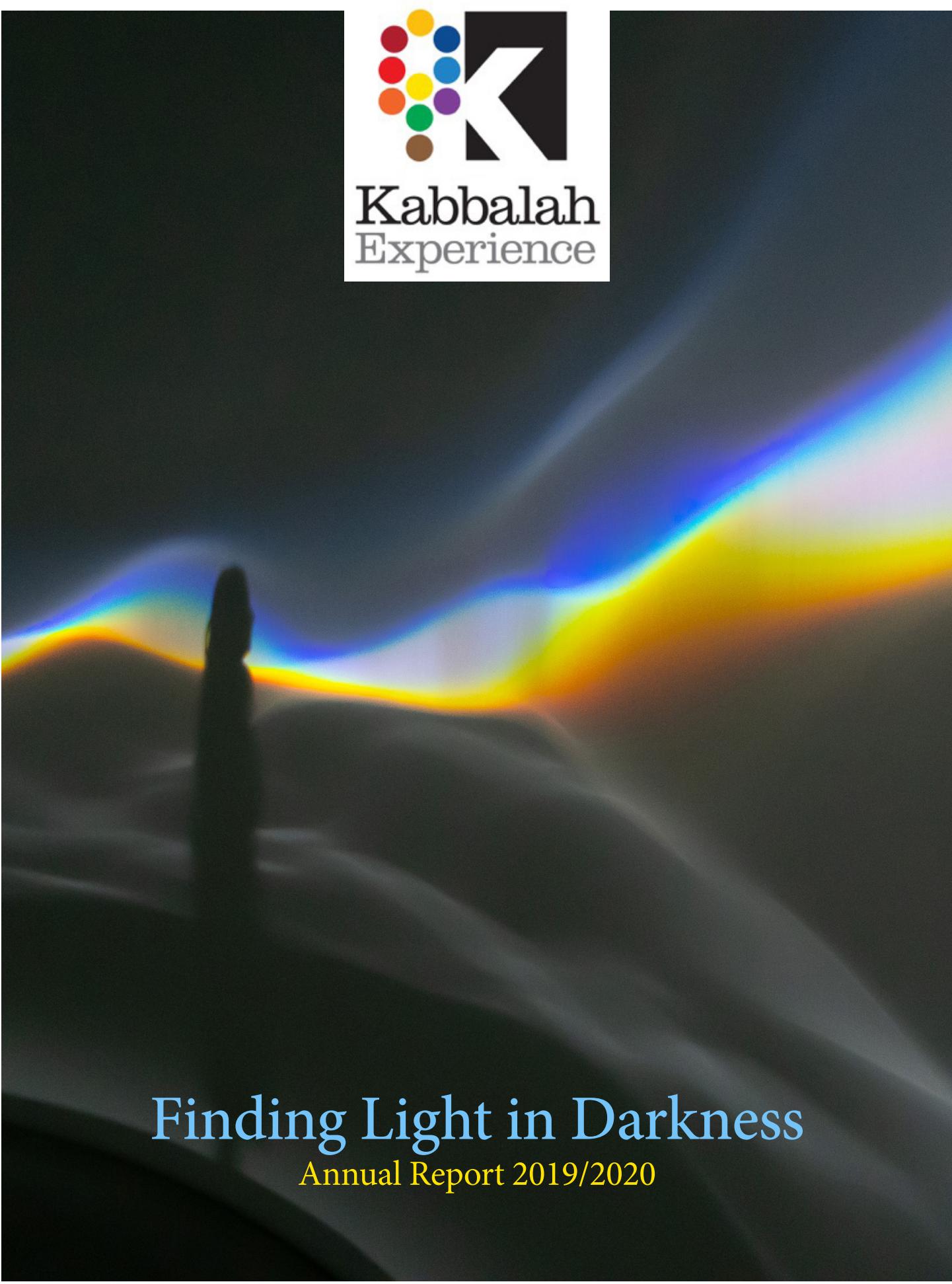


Kabbalah
Experience



Finding Light in Darkness
Annual Report 2019/2020

Reflections from the Executive Director

When I was a little girl, my Poppy and I shared a special song — “You Light Up My Life” by Debbie Boone. When Poppy would come to visit, I’d put the 45 RPM on my record player and sing my heart out with him. My grandfather was a wonderful singer, and my son Koby (z”l) was named for him — Yaakov Rani. His middle name, Rani, means “my song” or “my joy” in Hebrew.

This recognition of light resonates throughout kabbalah. In our study, we explore the concept of finding “light in darkness.”

In the biblical narrative of creation, everything starts with darkness. Our days begin at night; creation began before there was Ohr/ light. There was darkness, and then God said, “Let there be light.”

This year, 2020, has been a lesson in finding light in darkness. This light has remained strong because of each of you — our students, donors, and volunteers, who help Kabbalah Experience thrive, especially during unpredicted and unprecedented darkness.

In the past year, KE has:

- Deepened teaching with our core faculty: Dr. David Sanders, Rabbi Jamie Arnold, and Melanie Gruenwald.
- Expanded Adjunct Faculty: welcoming Colorado-based educators Hal Aqua, Reb Dr. Tirzah Firestone, Sue Parker Gerson, Rabbi Baruch Halevi, Susan Kaplan; J. Ruth Gendler from Northern California, and Rabbi Sara Brandes and Reb Dr. Mimi Feigelson from Israel.
- Hosted 55 classes, reaching 70 new students, and 257 unique individuals.
- Welcomed new members to the KE Board of Directors: Vicki Dansky, Mark Grimm, Karen Novick, Marta Pentecost, and Stacy Wasserman. We are grateful to Robyn Loup for serving in an advisory capacity in 2020.
- Launched *Who Are You: Masks Self-Study* video in the spring of 2020.
- Published *KE Haggadah: Pass Over to Freedom* and *KE Omer Journal: Your Seven-Week Journey to Transformation* — both released on Amazon in the spring of 2020.
- Initiated a fundraiser, *The Masks Project*, which raised over \$6,700 to purchase protective masks for Shalom Park residents, health care providers, front-line workers and vulnerable community members.
- Launched *KE Beyond the Walls*, one-time classes, to create connection and engagement beyond regular live-study courses. KE received a \$3,600 PIN Grant from JEWISHcolorado and an UpStart Re-grant which helped support this initiative.
- Expanded infrastructure by purchasing Salesforce, investing in marketing strategy with StratLabs, and expanding ZOOM capability.
- Executive Director Melanie Gruenwald participated with UpStart Change Accelerator, a local fellowship for entrepreneurs, and received a follow-up grant from the organization’s Re-Grant program.
- Spiritual Director David Sanders was able to take a sabbatical in the summer of 2020, giving him time to develop a new book, *Original Skin*.
- Received \$160,738 in individual donations — 219 gifts from 151 unique donors.
- Applied for and received a PPP loan, which converted into a grant in FY2020 and helped sustain Kabbalah Experience through COVID.

The brightest light through all of this has been you, our community of students, volunteers, faculty, donors, and leaders, who continue to show up for and with Kabbalah Experience. One year ago, we never could have imagined shutting our office doors (for the time being), and running Kabbalah Experience remotely. Leaning into the technology has allowed us to reach students across the country and world—we are no longer limited by geographic boundaries.

We have supported one another through illness, loss, recovery, and loneliness — and learned so much through the intense political climate and COVID. We have learned so much about one another other, and ourselves.

There is nothing more we would love than to be able to hug each of you in person. For now, feel the love and gratitude virtually. And thank you for lighting up our lives.

With gratitude,
Melanie

Melanie Gruenwald is the Executive Director of Kabbalah Experience. She teaches Foundation classes (Levels I and II) and Special Classes.



Reflections from the Spiritual Director

Last night we went out with other families in the neighborhood to gaze up toward the southwest sky and see a little sparkle. It looked like any star in the night sky, yet we knew that the larger sparkle was Jupiter and the smaller one was Saturn. This was confirmed when we retreated back home and virtually looked through the high-powered telescope of the Griffiths Observatory in California. The colored belts and zones of Jupiter were delightfully visible and the rings of Saturn unexpectedly distinct. I was feeling that the observatory should be playing the soundtrack from *2001: A Space Odyssey* as the head astronomer announced that if we looked carefully, we could make out three dots which were moons of Jupiter. These are the moons that Galileo first observed in 1609 to revolutionize scientific understanding that earth was a planet in a solar system.

Why should we make such a fuss if those two planets came “really close” (they were still more than a hundred million miles apart) to each other? If our telescopes were even more powerful, wouldn’t we have access to seeing planets in other solar systems or other galaxies in conjunction? In the vastness of the multi-verse these events could be happening every minute of every day, not just once in 400 years!

If we look at this from another perspective, it becomes obvious that conjunctions or convergences are how relationships form. What intrigued Galileo or Einstein was how it all fit together — what was the relationship among the planets that could explain their orbits and their effect on the curvature of space and gravity.

As with the planets, which are bound by the laws of physics and orbit in their fixed pathways, we can marvel at who and what converges or conjuncts as we cross the habitual streets of our routine. Unlike the planets, we can shift our orbits, hop, skip or jump our way to a new curvature in space and discover, as Galileo did 400 years ago, that how we thought our small universe works is actually not the way it works at all. We are all rotating together, each planet, each person, playing a part in the rhythm of the cosmos and in the creation of what our human narrative will be.

When we first started Kabbalah Experience fifteen years ago, a man came into our orbit and graciously offered his services. Elliott Husney, may his memory be a blessing, served as our first Board Chair. I had the opportunity to share with him how much his leadership meant to me personally and to the growth of KE. Elliott did not look for accolades. He chose to help

because he believed in our mission. He shared with me that through Kabbalah study he was able to connect with the legacy of his great-grandfather, a respected Sephardic Kabbalist. Elliott would have been pleased to know that another relative of his was currently involved with KE. Melanie recently shared that on her father’s side of the family, the Sassons and Husneys are *mishpachah* (family).

I would be remiss in not mentioning Ken Heller, may his memory be a blessing, a life-long dear friend of Elliott’s, who joined the inaugural KE Board as our treasurer. He volunteered countless hours to maintain our books and our operations. There was no task too small for Ken as KE became a part of his daily orbit. His selfless dedication to us and many other organizations is a part of his legacy. I miss both of these men, their mentorship, their helpful criticism and the warmth of their broad smiles.

What I value the most from our study together is the relationships, the convergences and conjunctions we develop with each other. I want to thank all those who have served on our Board of Directors these many years, our donors and staff, and especially our Board Chairs. You have all allowed that small spark we started with back in 2005 to be a recognizable star in the Denver community, and now well beyond our state and country, for the purpose of shifting people’s lives through our transformative study together.

Thank you to our Board Chairs and Board Co-Chairs over these many years: Elliott Husney z”l, Sally Stich, Ilana Erez, Nancy Steele, Dr. Andrew Freeman, Rachel Namoff, Dr. Melvin Wernimont, Ken Diamond, our current Board Chair Bettina Kurowski, and incoming Board Chair Michelle Friedman.

With gratitude and love,
David

David Sanders is the Founder and Spiritual Director of Kabbalah Experience. David teaches Level III, Level IV, Advanced and Special Classes.



Conjunctions or convergences are how relationships form.

Meet Our Faculty

Rabbi Jamie Arnold, a core faculty member at Kabbalah Experience, has been teaching at KE since the fall of 2014. Rabbi Jamie brings a deep sensitivity, spirit and connection to the classes he teaches with us. He is well-known for his exploration of Mussar and bringing students on a meaningful journey with him.

Rabbi Jamie teaches Foundation classes, Mussar, Advanced and Special Classes. He also runs a popular 'drop-in' class on Friday mornings, Music and Meditation.



Hal Aqua fronts klezmer fusion band The Lost Tribe; serves as music director for B'nai Havurah, Denver's Jewish Reconstructionist congregation; provides songleading at Temple Micah; facilitates and provides music for life cycle ceremonies; and teaches classes, workshops and seminars on Jewish world music. www.halaqua.com
Summer 2020: Kabbalah of Dylan



Ordained at the Jewish Theological Seminary, **Rabbi Sara Brandes** is a writer, teacher and healer who lives in the north of Israel. Past Executive Director at Or HaLev: Center for Jewish Spirituality and Meditation, Sara teaches Judaism as a world wisdom tradition. A certified yoga instructor and mindfulness practitioner, Sara is author of *Magical World: Stories, Reflections, Poems*.
Summer 2020: Awakened Body



Rabbi Dr. Reb Mimi (Miriam Sara) Feigelson is an ordained female Orthodox rabbi, international teacher of Chassidut, Spirituality and a storyteller. Reb Mimi created the role of the *Mashpiyah Ruchanit* (spiritual mentor) in Rabbinical Seminaries in the United States and in Israel. Reb Mimi has served as the associate director of the Yakar Institute for Tradition and Creativity, and as the director of the Women's Beit Ha'midrash. She is the blessed and proud soul-mother to over a dozen children.
Winter 2020: Prayer and Chasidut



Rabbi Tirzah Firestone, PhD, author, Jungian psychotherapist, and founding rabbi of Congregation Nevei Kodesh in Boulder, CO, is a leader in the Jewish Renewal Movement and a renowned scholar and teacher. Tirzah has taught nationally for over 30 years about body-mind psychology, Kabbalah, feminist mysticism, ancestral healing and other modern applications of ancient wisdom. [@tirzahfire](http://www.tirzahfirestone.com)

Fall 2019: Repairing the Soul: Intergenerational Healing and Kabbalistic Wisdom



Writer and artist **J. Ruth Gendler** is the author of the award winning *Notes on the Need for Beauty*, the anthology *Changing Light*, and the bestseller *The Book of Qualities*. Her art work, including paintings, drawings and monotypes, have been exhibited nationally. Gendler has worked as an artist in the schools and led creativity workshops for children and adults in a variety of venues for thirty years; she is an articulate spokeswoman for the importance of the arts in daily life and in education.



Summer 2020: The Wisdom of Beauty

Sue Parker Gerson is a Senior Associate Director for the ADL Mountain States Region serving Colorado, New Mexico and Wyoming. Prior to joining ADL, Sue worked in the field of Jewish Education and served for many years as the Colorado director of the Florence Melton Adult Mini-School and for four years as a Melton Regional Director. She earned her MA from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and is the co-author of *Teaching Jewish History*.



Summer 2020: Pirkei Avot and Social Justice

Rabbi Dr. Baruch HaLevi (Rabbi B) has served congregations for eighteen years, most recently in Swampscott, MA, where he created the fastest growing synagogue in the Northeast. Rabbi B is focused on Spark Seekers Ventures, guiding clients of all religions, faith traditions and backgrounds through Spark Seekers Grief Coaching and The Spark Seekers Grief Experience. He is also building "Soul Centered," a physical and virtual platform and community focused on spirituality, meaning and healing.



Spring 2020: The Soul's Journey: The Dead, the Living, and the Undying Soulmate Love

Susan Kaplan, MSW, MPA, RYT has an integrative social work practice, Listening & Leading From Within, LLC, where she provides coaching, training and facilitation. She works with individuals, families, teams, organizations, leadership and staff development, and community groups. Susan has experienced the power of collective grief rituals, valuing mutuality, healing, and the collective practice of loving kindness and open heartedness.



Summer 2020: Walking with Grief Mini-Retreat

Thanks to Our Volunteers

At Kabbalah Experience, we could not manage without our volunteers. This year, Ken Selecter became our steadfast weekly volunteer. He would show up, and just do whatever was needed around the office, from making phone calls to helping us get organized. Thank you, Ken, for your dedication. With COVID, we have not been able to continue this relationship — and we certainly miss having time with you.

We are grateful to Jodi Eisen for her work on the Annual Event this year. Your support and participation made a huge difference, even though the event was cancelled due to COVID.

Kabbalah Experience Board of Directors

Thank you to our board of directors for your commitment, leadership and vision. It is a gift to be able to work with you.

2020-2021

Gwen Crawford

Vicki Dansky

Michelle Friedman,

Vice Chair

Mark Grimm

Bettina Kurowski, *Chair*

Martin Morris,

Finance Chair

Karen Novick

Marta Pentecost

Michelle Saxer

Morgan Sicklick

Amy Topelson

Stacy Wasserman

*We gratefully acknowledge
the service of those board
members who rotated off the
board this last year:*

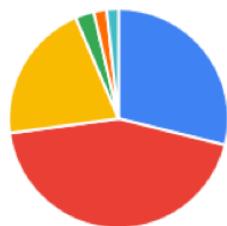
Ken Diamond

Robyn Loup

Dr. Sharon Sagel

Financials Profit and Loss—FY 2019/2020

Income FY 2019/2020



■ Tuition
■ Rose Community Foundation grant
■ Membership
■ Fundraising
■ Board of Directors
■ Masks project

INCOME

Tuition	111,604.00
Fundraising	170,164.00
Rose Community Foundation grant	80,000.00
Board of Directors	10,661.00
Membership	7,300.00
Masks project	6,749.00
TOTAL	386,478.00

Expenses FY 2019/2020



■ Operations
■ Faculty and Course Development
■ Masks project
■ Marketing/Development
■ Salaries and Contract Employees

EXPENSES

Operations	49,364.00
Marketing/Development	35,588.00
Faculty and Course Development	99,596.00
Salaries and Contract Employees	155,725.00
Masks project	6,749.00
TOTAL	347,022.00

Upcoming Opportunities

The newest Kabbalah Experience opportunities will be available in 2021:

- Time streaming course and student guide
- Expansion of *Newish: A New way to BE Jewish*, thought leadership from Dr. David Sanders
- Publication of *Original Skin*, a book by Dr. David Sanders
- Expansion of *KE Beyond the Walls*, one-time classes for intimate learning circles, with Melanie Gruenwald
- Purim Mishloach Manot/Masks gift packages
- Monthly Film Series and conversation with directors
- New subscription model — supporting Kabbalah Experience

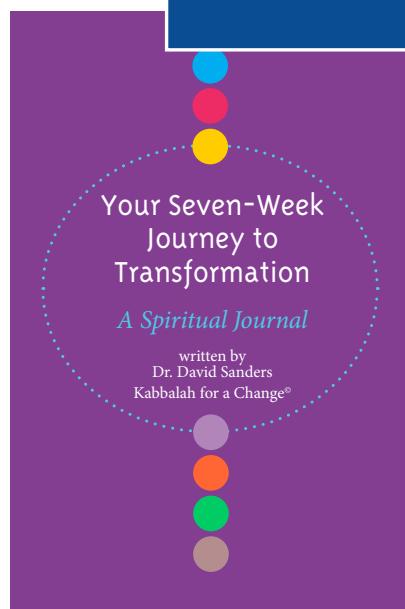
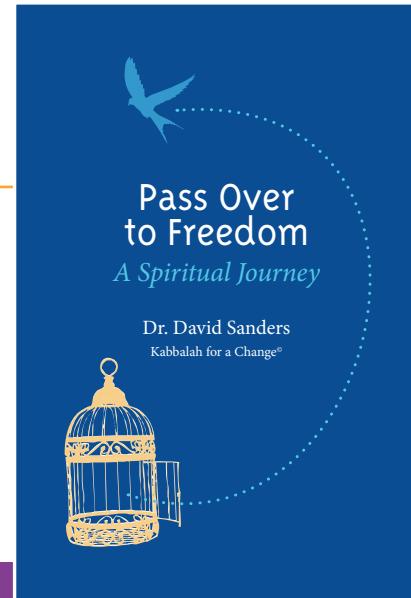


Become a part of the KE legacy and underwrite one of these initiatives. Your name and dedication will be featured throughout Kabbalah Experience materials. Please contact Melanie (melanie@kabbalahexperience.com) about these opportunities.

Give the gift of Transformative Kabbalah!

- KE Haggadah: Pass Over to Freedom
Why is this ZOOM seder different than every other ZOOM seder?
- KE Omer Journal: Your Seven-Week Journey to Transformation
- Tree of Life notecards

All products available at: <http://kabbalahexperience.com/shop>



Donors

As a school, tuition is a significant source of KE's income. That said, we would never be able to offer as many courses, educational materials and events without the even larger sum of private donations from our community. We are grateful for this powerful support you and other students provide. We thank you for your generosity.

This list reflects donations from July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020. We apologize for any inadvertent omissions.

K E T E R

Anonymous
Bender West Foundation
Gwen Crawford
Ken Diamond
Kristi Dinner
Michelle Friedman
Diane Gimber
Barbara Goldburg
Eileen and Richard Greenberg
Mark Grimm
Celeste Grynberg
Bonnie Houghton
JEWISHcolorado
Bettina Kurowski
Robyn Loup
Louann and Micky Miller
Marty Morris
Karen and Rob Novick
Nancy Nowak
Jane E and Stanton (z"l)
Rosenbaum
Dr. Sharon Sagel
Michelle Saxer
Sims Lines Charitable Fund
Andrea Singer Pollack
Rose Community Foundation
Leo Tokar
Amy Toltz-Miller
Amy Topelson

T I F E R E T

Laurie and Andrew Brock
Dr. Michael Charney
Robert Corn
Joe Costello
Vicki Danksy
Erica Farber
Mickey Gart
Susann Gordon
Shelly Goss
Rachel Grynberg
Kim Schneider Malek and Charles Malek
Dr. Joan Manheimer
Ray Merenstein/ RDM Communications
Elizabeth Moser
Grant Netzorg
Jill Oliver
Lori Sigman

Amy and Gerardo Topelson

Stacy Wasserman
Shira and Marty Zimmerman/
ZIM Consulting

Y E S O D

Brynn Asarch
Elaine and Dr. Richard Asarch
Rachel Averch
Peggy Beck
Dr. Meg Lemon-Blum
Krista Boscoe
Tracy Byarlay
Barbara Carpenter
Colorado Gives/ Community First Foundation
Lisa Cook
Cami Cooper
Susan Dahl
Jodi Eisen
Jeanie Engelbert
Betsy Epel
Foster, Graham, Milstein, & Calisher
Karen Frankel
Belina Fruitman
Ellen Goldstein
Sheryl Goodman
Mark Grimm
Melanie and Rabbi Salomon Gruenwald
Ariela HaLevi
Leslie Heins
Dr. Lynn Hellerstein
Dr. Angela Husney
Gloria Husney
Sharon Hwang and Ross Kelman
Beverly and Dr. Dan Jacobson
Amy Israel Pregelman
Susan Johnson
Deanne and Stephen Kapnik
Jaye Kephart
Dr. Barbara Kreisman
Karen Kruesi
Trudi Linas
Irene Lofland
Peggy Mayer
Lisa Mintz
Ed Monas
Laurie Morris
Vicki-Bluma Olesky

Marta Pentecost

Caren Press
Dr. Linda Reinstein
Rocky Mountain Rabbinical Council

Dr. Sharon Sagel

Beth Samuelson
Rita and Dr. David Sanders
Dr. Stephanie Segal
Ken Selecter
Morgan Sicklick
Gail Sigman
Carolyn Steele
Nancy Steele
Kiki Stein
Andrea and Scott Stillman
Stacy Wasserman
Lori Weiner
Drs. Anne and Mel Wernimont
Barry Winograd

M A L C H U T

Carole Adelstein
Leslie Alger
Sue Allon
Tamar Arbeli
Carole and Richard Baumbusch
The Benevity Community Impact Fund
Steven Bieringer
Judith Bingenheimer
Gail Borwick Walter
Myndie Brown
Ronn Castle
Hermine Cohen-Bergen
Cheri Cohn
Julie Crane
Bonnie Davis
Wendy Davis
Bernice Dinner
Ron Dullinger
Martin Factor
Lee Fisher-Rosenberg
Debbie Friedman
Julie Geller
Lesley Glenner
Robin Glickstein
Chuck and Honey Goldberg
Adele Gordon
Barbara Hamilton and Paul Primus
Cathy and Gary Hawk

Carole and Bill Horger

Alecia Huck
Kate Kalstein
Cherie Karo Schwartz
Jill Katchen
Erin Katz
Anita Khaldy and Dr. Dean Kehmeier
Sally Kurtzman
Pamela Law
Suzan and James Leach
Daria Leslea
Carly Letzt-Carney
Laurie Levy-Sher
Joyce Lisbin
Laurie Marcus
Pamela Mayeda
Bonnie Merenstein
Maggie Miller and Doug Gertner
Elyn Moldow
Martin Morris
Eileen Naiman
Pearl Neiman
Dennis Niernberg
Marta Pentecost
Lesly Pogrew-Terrance
Beth Radetsky
Myra Rieger
Donna Rodden
Terry Rubin
Sheila Sasson
Michele Scharg
Tammy Schiff
Mirella Schreiber
Sharon Sears
Claire Seiden
Terry Seiver
Shira Shump
Barbara Sidon
Michael Sidon
Nancy Silverstone
Sally & Tom Stich
Noreen Stillman
Alex Strnad
Eleanor Vonnegut
Michelle Wecksler
Daphne Wells
Terri Wolinetz
Cathy Woodrow

We Are Grateful for You!

At Kabbalah Experience we are building upon a powerful foundation by nurturing creativity, community, and connections.

In the Tree of Life, *Hod* is Surrender: acknowledging what is, accepting and giving way. HOD is also representative of GRATITUDE as we flow on to *Malchut*, manifestation.

With your support, we have hope that the evolving story of Kabbalah Experience continues on.

Please consider making your year-end gift to help support the future of Kabbalah Experience today!



Kabbalah
Experience

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303.337.0959

www.kabbalahexperience.com

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