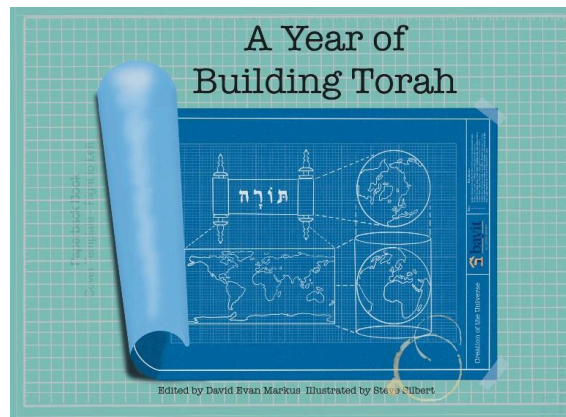
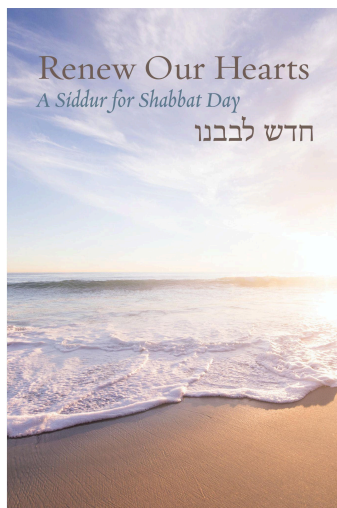
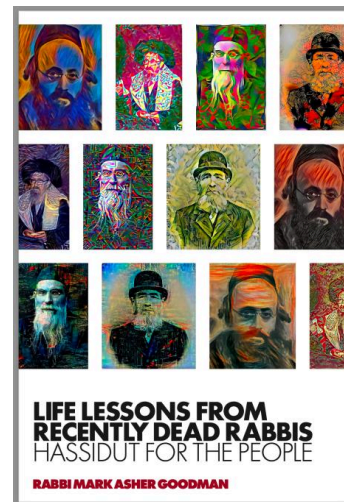


2023 Annual Report of Bayit: Building Jewish



Blueprint: Table of Contents

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Bayit's Mission and Vision (Revised This Year)

Mission:

Bayit is building a soulful, inclusive and meaningful Jewish life for all ages and stages. Our visionary teams of clergy, liturgists, artists, educators and other thought leaders across and beyond denominational life develop, test, refine and distribute tools for a Jewish future always under construction.

Vision:

From Bayit's building vision emerge keystone principles for building Jewish life:

- Building is for everyone. A Judaism in which all can be builders must uplift the leadership and innovation of all ages, all genders and sexual orientations, all races and ethnicities, and visionaries with all kinds of inner wiring.
- Building is for all streams of Jewish life. A Judaism of wisdom must flow with the ever-changing streams of Jewish life, in every form that treasures diversity, and wise innovation rooted in Jewish values, times and practices.
- Building is for lived experience. A practical Judaism puts experience first, bringing to life ancient designs (text, values, prayer, social justice, rhythms) with modern tools, structures and systems.

- Building is constantly in progress. A Judaism that increases wisdom and completeness is always “under construction,” with tools that wisely and playfully “remix” tradition with innovation, what’s been and what’s next.
- Building needs both grounding and height. A Judaism of builders needs designs that serve their purposes, strong and stable grounding, and height to rise above foundations – all balanced to stand strong and gently move with shifting ground.
- Building needs the right tools for the right jobs. Wise building uses design tools of research and development – to courageously try, measure, tweak and try again – balancing best practices and subjective experience.
- Building must be real. A Judaism of real wisdom and lasting value must be authentic both inwardly and outwardly.

To fulfill this vision, Bayit inhabits the dynamic intersection of three overlapping centers of creative vitality:

- Bayit is a multi-skill collective. Bayit brings together diverse creatives in liturgy, ritual, visual art, music, thought leadership, pedagogical excellence and public engagement to create together what wouldn’t be possible alone.
- Bayit is a dynamic encounter network. Bayit innovates by consciously curating collaboration spaces that are diverse in denomination, demography, communal context, perspective, age, gender and sexual identity, so that imagineers’ strengths and differences can catalyze collective creativity and excellence.
- Bayit is a design-thought incubator. Bayit uses modern design-thinking systems – grounded in system theory, and refined in leadership development and business circles – to think outside boxes, align creativity with use cases, scale production and hold ourselves and each other accountable.

Year At A Glance

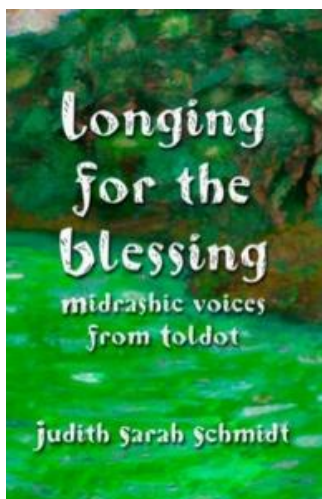
In 2023, we...

- Released *A Year of Building Torah*
- Released *Life Lessons from Recently Dead Rabbis: Hassidut for the People*
- Released *Longing for the Blessing*
- Released *Renew Our Hearts: A Siddur for Shabbat Day*
- Curated weekly parshanut exploring Torah through a social justice lens at Builders Blog
- Released a variety of Liturgical Arts Working Group offerings including:
 - *Amidah offering: All This Power / Gevurot*
 - *Amidah offering: Ancestors / Avot v'Imahot*
 - *Amidah offering: Open / Adonai S'fatai*
 - *Our Collective Heartbreak: a response to Oct. 7*
- Released a variety of innovative tools for spiritual life, including:
 - Plagues of Our Times
 - Chad Gadya: the One-Zuzim Edition
 - Chad Gadya: verb expansion pack
 - Kadesh Urchatz hex cards
 - Seder Plate Reboot
- Added Magnetic Shul to our collection of tangible innovative tools

Bayit Publishing

In 2023, the books we brought forward included:

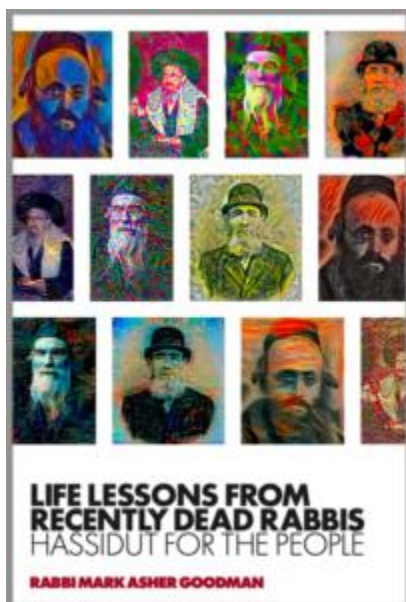
[Longing for the Blessing: Midrashic Voices from Toldot](#)



By Judith Sarah Schmidt. In poetry and prose, psychologist and dream scholar Judith Schmidt plumbs the depths of the stories in the Torah portion named Toldot, “Generations.” Her midrashic (aggadic / narrative) imaginings yield new insights into familiar figures, and her interweaving of Torah with family history illuminates how our Torah stories are always about our ancient spiritual ancestors and also about us.

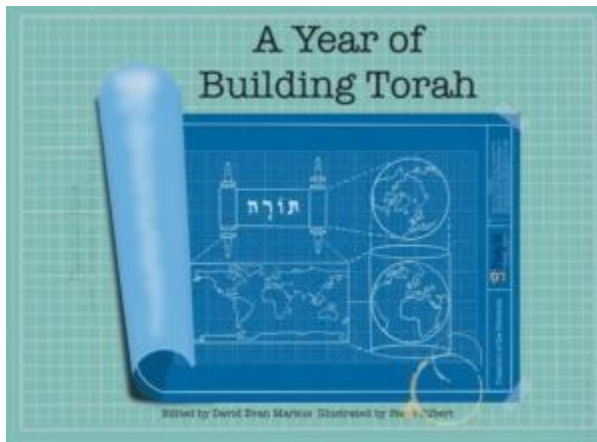
This is the second edition of a book originally published by Time Being Books in 2013, now with a new introduction by the author. [Available for \\$20.](#)

[Life Lessons from Recently Dead Rabbis: Hassidut for the People](#)



By Rabbi Mark Asher Goodman. [Life Lessons from Recently Dead Rabbis: Hassidut for the People](#) is a book of Hassidic texts with contemporary commentary, meant for anybody who is seeking a little spiritual and moral guidance. The great Hassidic masters believed that all human beings were brought into the universe with purpose, and that a worthwhile life involves analyzing and reflecting on that purpose. The purpose of this book is to bring out these life lessons for the next generation – an independent and bold generation that is more diverse, more feminist, more queer, more individualistic, and perhaps more reflective than ever before. [Available for \\$22.](#)

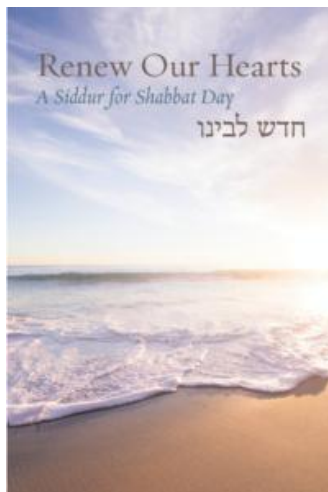
[A Year of Building Torah](#)



A Year of Building Torah, ed. R. David Evan Markus, is a volume of parshanut (Torah commentary) accompanied by #VisualTorah, featuring a variety of voices (both clergy and lay) from across and beyond the denominations. Built on the foundation of Bayit’s animating principle — that the Jewish future is always under construction and that all of us are tasked with building that future — these essays explore Torah through a building-focused lens. Each is accompanied and uplifted by

Steve Silbert’s #VisualTorah sketchnotes. [Available for \\$24.](#)

[Renew Our Hearts: A Siddur for Shabbat Day](#)



Published jointly by Bayit and [Ben Yehuda Press](#). **Renew Our Hearts** balances tradition with innovation, featuring liturgy for morning (shacharit and a renewing approach to musaf, the “additional” service of Shabbat and festivals), afternoon (mincha), and evening (ma’ariv and havdalah), along with curated works of poetry, art and new liturgies from across the breadth of Jewish spiritual life. [Read more about it on its own page](#), where you’ll find list of contributors and more. [Available for \\$18-36](#) (regular or large-print), with a discount for ten or more copies if ordered through Ben Yehuda.

And on Builders Blog...

In addition to the books we brought forward in 2023, we also maintained a weekly posting schedule on Builders Blog, where Lead Builder D. Dara Lithwick curated a weekly parshanut series exploring **Torah through an ethic of social justice** and building a world worthy of the Divine. She invited guest posts from a variety of social justice-oriented people across the United States and Canada throughout 5783.

Liturgical Arts Working Group

Adonai S'fatai: Open



Here is new work arising out of *Adonai s'fatai tiftach*, the one-line meditation that opens the Amidah. Pray these in community or on your own. Add pages from the PDF to photocopied handouts, or add slides from the slide deck to services. Make one of the slides the desktop background on your computer, or use some of the art as wallpaper for your phone. Use these in whatever way will best enable these words and images to

speak to and for your heart. This first Amidah collaboration features work from Trisha Arlin, R. Rachel Barenblat, Joanne Fink, R. Sonja Keren Pilz, Steve Silbert, and R. David Zaslow. Available, as always, as downloadable PDF and also as slides suitable for screenshare. Find it here: [Amidah Offering – Adonai S'fatai](#).

Avot v'Imahot: Ancestors



The first blessing of the Amidah names God as “God of” Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and in liberal Jewish spaces, also God of Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah. What does it mean to us to connect with holiness through our ancestors? How do we understand our lineage and our relationship to it? What traces do our generations leave for us? How does this prayer speak for us (or does it speak for us)

— and can we affirm its vision of a relational God? These are some of the questions that animated our collaborative work on this offering of liturgy, poetry, and art. This Amidah collaboration features work from Trisha Arlin, Mike Cockrill, R. Rachel Barenblat, Joanne Fink, R. Sonja Keren Pilz, Steve Silbert, and R. David Zaslow. Available, as always, as downloadable PDF and also as slides suitable for screenshare. Find it here: [Amidah Offering – Ancestors](#).

[Gevurot: All This Power](#)



The second blessing of the Amidah speaks to a God of *gevurah*: strength, heroism, boundaries, power. This blessing names God as the One Who enlivens the dead (or the deadened, or all things). Here we bless God either as the One Who brings rain and wind, or the One Who calls forth the dew. What do these ideas mean for us? What does *gevurah* imply for us? How does this prayer speak for us (or does it speak for us)? Where

does this blessing take us? These are among the questions that animated our collaborative work on this offering of liturgy, poetry, and art. Featuring work from Trisha Arlin, Mike Cockrill, R. Rachel Barenblat, Joanne Fink, R. Sonja Keren Pilz, Emily Rogal, Steve Silbert, and R. David Zaslow. Available, as always, as downloadable PDF and also as slides suitable for screenshare. Find it here: [Amidah Offering: All This Power / Gevurot](#).

[Our Collective Heartbreak](#)



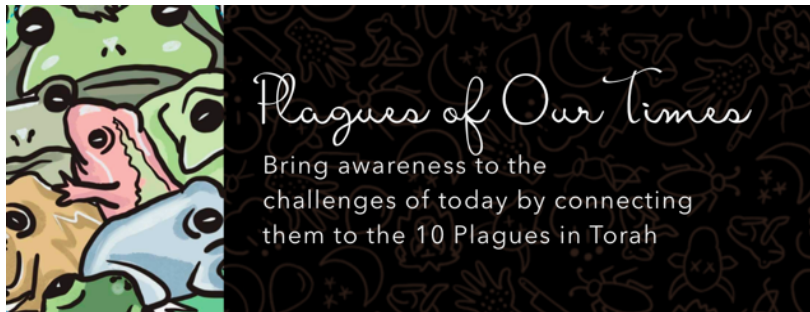
Disbelief, fear, anger, grief, despair, love, anguish, longing, solidarity, alienation, hope: since October 7 we've felt all of these and more. This is our attempt to give voice to some of what's in our hearts. We hope that it will speak to and for your heart too. May these words help us through these difficult days and into the work of building the just peace of which we dream.

This collaboration features work from Trisha Arlin, Mike Cockrill, Sherrill Cropper, R. Rachel Barenblat, Joanne Fink, R. Allie Fischman, R. Bracha Jaffe, R. Dara Lithwick, R. David Evan Markus, R. Sonja Keren Pilz, and R. David Zaslow. Available, as always, as downloadable PDF and also as slides suitable for screenshare. Find it here: [Our Collective Heartbreak](#).

Spiritual Innovation Tools

This year we released six **Pesach-related innovation tools** / games, each designed to bring a different facet of Pesach to life. We also added **Magnetic Shul** to our offerings.

Passover – Plagues of Our Times



Connect today's challenges with the 10 Plagues from Torah.

Featuring artwork by creator Mary Walther. Co-creator Steve Silbert writes: *The 10 Plagues in the Haggadah can seem far removed from*

us in the 21st century, but are they? We've never seen the Nile turn to blood — but we've seen a Red Tide algae bloom. Swarms of insects causing havoc — how about murder hornets? Fire streaming down — how about hailstorms and weather of increasing intensity?

Use this set to make connection between Torah and today so that the story of the Exodus is as first person as possible. [Purchase at GameCrafter](#)

Passover – Chad Gadya Cards

Chad Gadya gamified! No winners or losers (except the goat), just an extra layer of fun to the song.



This set of Chad Gadya cards can be used tableside. Divide the cards up and start singing, with people holding up the right cards at the right time.

(Bonus for anyone holding

two cards, one in each hand, who can remember which one to lift at which time, especially after four celebratory cups of wine!) These cards' images are compatible with singing in any language. [Purchase at GameCrafter](#)

Passover – Chad Gadya: the ONE-Zuzim Edition

Chad Gadya gamified! No winners or losers (except the goat), just an extra layer of fun to the song.



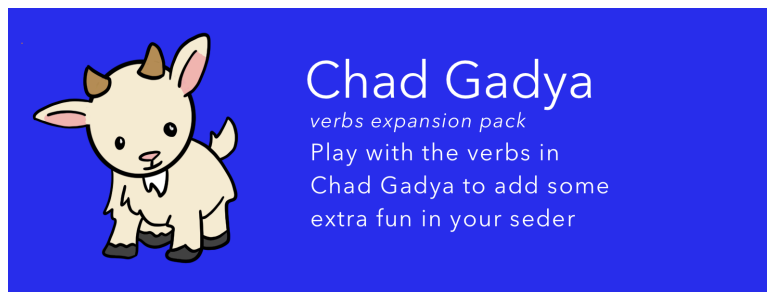
On the surface, Chad Gadya appears to be a nursery rhyme. But the odd imagery in this song seemingly about a baby goat bought with two coins has deeper meaning. This isn't only an amusing pirate shanty to be sung with

a glass of wine in hand. Divide the cards up and start singing, with people holding up the right cards at the right time. If you're the first person to hold up your card, then toss the card to the ground (never toss The Holy One card to the ground). Keep singing until the end.

(If you've ever played the game [Happy Salmon](#), you'll recognize this as a seder-appropriate twist on that game mechanic.) These cards' images are compatible with singing in any language. [Purchase at GameCrafter](#)

Passover – Chad Gadya Verb Expansion Pack

Optional expansion pack for the Chad Gadya deck.



Use this expansion pack alone or with the Chad Gadya – ONE Zuzim edition to add some fun and spirit to your seder. Divide the cards evenly among participants and start singing, with people holding up the right

cards at the right time. [Purchase at GameCrafter](#)

Passover – Kadesh Urchatz



A set of tiles that tell everyone “you are here” in the progress of the seder.

Creator Steve Silbert writes: When I was a young adult leading seder, my father (z”l) would gently poke at me by

continually asking “When is dinner?” to which I replied “Not yet.”

Eventually I made a poster of the order of the seder, gave him stickers and the responsibility to add stickers as we completed sections of the seder. We offer a 21st century version of my father’s poster with this set of hexagon tiles, with each tile containing one step of the Passover seder. Wind them around the tzimmes and past the brisket dishes. Use the salt shaker as a game piece.

These beautiful tiles will add color to the table (beyond the red wine stains) and open opportunities for deeper conversations.

These tiles can be used in conjunction with the [Seder Plate Reboot](#), also from Bayit Games. If you’re looking for ideas on how to use them, here’s a post at Builders Blog: [Introducing Kadesh Urchatz](#).

[Purchase at GameCrafter](#)

Passover – Seder Plate Reboot



A seder plate doesn't need to take up so much space on the table.

Creators Steve Silbert and Mary Walter write: Why does a seder plate take up so much space on the table? No reason

is given. Mishnah Pesachim is commonly thought to contain the seder plate origins by referring to a “tray” to contain the paschal sacrifice.



In 16th century Europe, artisans began making seder plates of the symbolic foods. Some of these plates were intended to hold those foods; others may have had a more general Passover use.

We wanted to find a way to display the seder symbols on the table while honoring the place that the brisket and Bubbie’s tzimmes have on the table. We also wanted something both configurable and portable (for that journey in the desert). What we came up with is a Seder Plate Reboot!

This rebooted seder plate consists of hexagonal, non food-grade cardboard tiles for all of the traditional seder plate symbols. On the card backs is something you may not know about that symbol.

If you’re looking for suggestions for how to use them, and thoughts on how this tangible object can help us make the story real, here’s a post on Builders Blog: [Introducing the Seder Plate Reboot..](#)

Magnetic Shul



One of our newest tools is Magnetic Shul, the brainchild of Bayit builder Justin Sakofs. This tangible tool for Judaic play is offered under the umbrella of Bayit Games.

Justin writes, “I’m a Jewish educator who believes in meeting learners where they are.

I created MagneticShul after years of working in the Jewish community and seeing the desire for families to have

shared meaningful experiences in shul. Inspired by work and family, I am happy to share MagneticShul with you.

For over a decade, MagneticShul has engaged children of all ages in adult sacred spaces. Children use the magnets of the people and props they encounter in shul to create their own scenes and learn as they experience the synagogue in their way. Some play as they sit with their parents during t’filot, others create their own synagogue while at home or on the road. Let us know how *you* use Magnetic Shul and how it works for you!”

Donors

This year we ran our first Kickstarter, to help us bring forward Sally Wiener Grotta’s *Daughters of Eve* in early 2024. We are thankful to everyone who supported that Kickstarter with donations; their support helped to make that publication possible.

About Us

To learn more about who we are and how we build:

- [Bayit ethics policy](#)
- [Bayit Builder Bios](#)
- [The Bayit Board of Directors](#)
- [Bayit Sounding Board / Advisors](#)