

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR SHJ HUMANISTIC JUDAISM, FALL 2019

“Sasha Sagan interview” with Rabbi Jeremy Kridel.

Sasha Sagan's experience in developing rituals that mean something for her and her family are an example for each of us.

1. What do you take from the interview and the excerpt from her book that you might put into your personal practice and the practice in your community?
2. Is there anything surprising, that you had not thought about before?
3. Is her approach "quintessentially Jewish"? In what way? Does this say something to and for all of Judaism and point to the future for Humanistic Judaism?

"Science as a Value Within Humanistic Judaism" by Marc Swetlitz

The variety of attitudes toward science in the Humanistic Jewish community shows clearly in the results of the survey and other studies by Marc. Grounding practice in a scientific outlook seems important in some way to virtually everyone. The openness to questioning and research is often said to be a characteristic of Judaism generally, though some Orthodox streams now appear anti-scientific.

1. What do you think Humanistic Judaism can do to reach out to non-Humanistic Jews to bring them into critical awareness of the importance of science in their daily lives? Do you think this is something HJ should seek to do?

"Climate Change Denial is a Church-State Separation Issue" by Paul Golin

Paul Golin shows that there is a strong movement among Biblical "literalists" who have insinuated themselves into the American political system and have had significant success in overturning moves to help the United States reduce its share of global emissions. They form an important part of the current president's power base. They are not only on the top of the governmental pyramid but can be found among officials and elected representatives in local communities.

1. How do you think these disturbing moves can be challenged and defeated? What role would Humanistic Jewish communities be able to play?

"Voice of Experience" by Saul Haffner z"l

From his Mother's answer to Saul's many "why" questions ("Y is a crooked letter") to his journey into Humanistic Judaism, Saul reveals how important the movement really is, and how Sherwin Wine's courage and wisdom brought so much to so many. Today, new people carry this torch and it is just as challenging for them, as for the founders.

1. In the wake of the 50th anniversary celebrations, what do you see as the future of Humanistic Judaism? How do you, and how does your community, think can be done to increase awareness of Humanistic Judaism among the larger Jewish community and among those who might be attracted to HJ's approach?

“Community News”

1. What do you see in other community's activities that your community might take on?
2. Is there something you do you think others might bring into their group and outreach?
3. How about a *Menschlichkeit* award?

“Kids Section”

The biographies of four women scientists were exciting.

1. Does it make you want to be like at least one of them?
2. Would you like to be a scientist?
3. Which excited you the most? Why?

Created by Steve Evans, SHJ Member, New Zealand