

BEYT TIKKUN

The House of Love and Healing

A Jewish Renewal Synagogue



“Join us as we seek to connect to the ultimate spiritual reality of the universe with joy, awe, wonder and radical amazement.”

A Jewish Renewal and Politics of Meaning Oriented Synagogue
for the San Francisco Bay Area

Under the leadership of
Rabbi Michael Lerner



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Welcome to Beyt Tikkun!

Jewish Spirituality and the Joyous Commitment To Heal and Transform the World

Many Jews have felt distanced from Judaism because their experience growing up in the Jewish world was alienating. Instead of encountering a vibrant spirituality, they encountered a community that felt spiritually lifeless. Very few people today recall moments in their childhood when their parents seemed to be excited about going to synagogue because they were about to have a spiritual experience that would broaden their understanding or deepen their connection to God.

All too often young people found a Jewish community that reflected the materialism and selfishness of the larger American society. Instead of Judaism being a spiritual and political alternative to the ethos of “me-firstism” and “looking out for no. 1,” it seemed to be a communal manifestation of market-driven values. Despite Judaism’s powerful injunctions concerning “*tikkun olam*” (the Jewish obligation to be involved in healing and transforming the world), it often seemed as if Jews were only concerned about their own survival. While no one can blame Jews for worrying about survival after the experience of two thousand years of oppression culminating in the Holocaust, the community that emerged from this trauma often seemed so bent out of shape, so paranoid about those who raised questions or doubts, so intolerant of those who challenged Israeli policies, and so joyless, that they were unable to open to themselves or their children the riches of the Jewish heritage and thus were unable to hold the loyalty of many of their young people.

No wonder, then, that many younger Jews have sought spiritual nourishment in various Eastern or New Age philosophies, or have sought an ethical community through their involvement in purely secular political movements. Others have given up on community altogether and sought solace in the development of an inner life or psychological wholeness. From these experiences, many Jews have learned valuable lessons that can enrich the Jewish community and deepen Jewish spirituality.

We at Beyt Tikkun are part of a global effort to create a Jewish Renewal movement that reclaims Judaism from conformism, materialism and spiritual deadness. Among its central injunctions are:

Be Real. We are building a Jewish life in which people can be involved in a real way that feels right to them, not just to please parents or relatives. We do not believe that one should participate in rituals and prayers that feel meaningless or oppressive.

Don't split spirituality from social change. A central message of our Torah is that the God of creation is the God of liberation: there should be no separation between our spiritual life and our ethical life. No matter how deep our inner experience, we are not living a "spiritually realized life" when we ignore the pain and suffering of others. Our Torah and our Prophets insisted that spiritual life could not be separated from political struggle to heal and transform the world. So Jewish spiritual life must also explicitly address how we as individuals and as a community can participate most effectively in the struggles for social justice, peace, ecological sanity and a world based on love and open-heartedness.

But I'm Not Sure I Can Believe in God

As children, many of us learned conceptions of God that are unacceptable to us as adults. We heard of a patriarchal and authoritarian God who sat up in heaven and inter-

vened in human affairs at will, sometimes responding to our prayers if we were good or said them right, sometimes ignoring us when we needed Him. This God was most mysteriously absent during the Holocaust.

You may have to let go of this picture of God in order to actually encounter the God of the universe. We are more inclined to another conception—God as the Power of healing and transformation, the Force in the universe that makes it possible to break the repetition compulsion to pass on to the next generation the pain that was done to us. In Rabbi Michael Lerner’s book, Jewish Renewal, you will find a way of thinking about God that does not require you to abandon your intellect or subordinate yourself to an arbitrary and vengeful father figure.

Our Jewish Renewal synagogue is a place where each of us is encouraged to explore the spiritual realm, and to work out our own understanding and our own relationship with God. In the final analysis, one might decide that the very word “God” (an English, not a Hebrew concept) is too loaded and misses the complexity of spiritual life. Rabbi Lerner urges us to not waste our time trying to convince ourselves to believe in authoritarian or patriarchal concepts of God that we’ve never been able to accept. As he puts it: The God you don’t believe in doesn’t exist—we stipulate that as a community—so please don’t spend your time fighting against the God that you don’t believe in, but instead use your time with us to connect to whatever spiritual reality in the universe you can access.

Let us stop fighting against the God that we don’t believe in. We stipulate that the God you don’t believe in doesn’t exist in order to make room for you to encounter the God or spiritual reality of the universe that you might believe in.

Rabbi Lerner’s teacher, Abraham Joshua Heschel, used to talk about God as “ineffable” precisely to capture this reality:

that our language is deeply limited and almost every attempt to speak about spiritual reality can become a caricature, turning what is a living reality into a lifeless and distorted idolatry.

We welcome you to develop your own spiritual life in the context of BEYT TIKKUN. Prayer services combine spiritual reflection, meditation, singing and study. You need not do what everyone else is doing. Use the time and space to deepen your own relationship with the ineffable—and then, as it feels comfortable, join us as we seek to connect to the ultimate spiritual reality of the universe with joy, music, awe, wonder and radical amazement.

Is This Authentic Judaism?

This question was first raised against the rabbis who wrote the Talmud. They were challenged by those who wanted to stick to a more literalistic interpretation of Torah.

Our first instinct is to reclaim, not discard. There is great spiritual, ethical, philosophical, psychological and political wisdom built into Jewish tradition.

The truth is that Judaism has gone through powerful transformations throughout history and it is precisely those transformations that have enabled it to survive. Renewing Judaism is an authentic process precisely because it refuses to allow each generation to lose touch with God's healing and transformation

energies. Jewish Renewal is a process by which we reconnect to God by transforming rituals and practices that lack meaning and depth in a post-modern context.

Our Jewish Renewal synagogue is also deeply committed to preserving tradition. Our first instinct is to reclaim, not discard. There is a great spiritual, ethical, philosophical, psychological and political wisdom built into our Jewish tradition. As a community, BEYT TIKKUN is committed to studying this tradition and exploring its insights.

Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, the founder of the Jewish Reconstructionist Movement, used to say our tradition has a vote but not a veto. A hundred generations have gone before us, each making its contribution to tradition. Under the guise of interpretation, each changed the Torah it received. We will continue this tradition, combining reverence and study with our commitment to authenticity and spiritual aliveness.

Open and Welcoming to All

BEYT TIKKUN welcomes you. Our aim is to build a community of people who are forging an authentic Jewish Renewal life. You are welcome to join us at whatever level of commitment or interest you have. It's fine to put "one toe in" and gradually find a level of involvement that feels right to you.

Don't be embarrassed if you don't know the prayers or melodies when you first become involved with us. Many congregants gradually learned them, and you will gradually learn them as well. Don't be embarrassed if you don't know Hebrew. We encourage you to ask about words or terms that you don't understand. If you don't know much about Judaism, it's most likely not your fault, but the responsibility of the Jewish community which was unable to turn you on as a child and create in you the desire to learn it. Or, maybe your parents were not Jewish or had distanced themselves from Judaism and never exposed you to the best of it.

We welcome and honor gays and lesbians into our community. We are committed to fighting against homophobia in the Jewish community and in American life. We welcome and honor single parent families and seek to provide them with support. And, we also welcome and honor heterosexual couples and traditional style families.

Because most American Jews derive from European/Ashkenazic backgrounds, other Jews have sometimes felt excluded from traditional Jewish communities. We welcome

Sephardic Jews into our community, knowing that we have much to learn from them. We hope they will feel honored in our synagogue.

We also welcome Black Jews (who have often been ignored in Jewish life) and Jews from South and Central America, and hope that they will bring their rich cultural traditions into the life of our synagogue. Recent immigrants from Russia and Eastern Europe, and Israelis are also invited to participate in our synagogue.

We welcome Jews from all class backgrounds. Jewish life is often dominated by those with money, while others have been made to feel marginalized. We cannot avoid the reality that our community needs money to pay for staff, facilities, publicity, etc. While we certainly want to honor people who generously donate their money to help sustain the community, we will not give unequal attention to gifts of money over gifts of time and energy.

We welcome converts and take an active role in encouraging conversion to Judaism. Conversion was discouraged in the Jewish world only after Christian societies made it a capital crime for Jews to convert Christians to Judaism. In many countries of Europe, the entire Jewish population could be expelled from a city if even one Christian was converted to Judaism. No wonder Jews became deeply resistant to conversion.



From our standpoint, converts play a central role in bringing new energy and new wisdom into Jewish life. We encourage non-Jews to learn about Judaism so that they may consider conversion.

We also welcome interfaith couples. We believe that every step taken to affirm Judaism is positive and should be supported.

Singles

Our congregation welcomes singles and believes that our members have a special obligation to take care of them. Too many people believe in American society's ideal of meritocracy which presumes that "you can make it if you really try" and the corollary that "if things aren't working out, you have nobody to blame but yourself". In the economic sphere, this way of thinking leads some people to feel perfectly justified in taking advantage of the poor and leads some to blame themselves for not being more successful. Inevitably, this way of thinking seeps into our personal lives so that many people come to believe that if they are single and don't want to be, it must be some personal failing on their part. Because this self-blame is so widespread, others feel that they might embarrass a single person if they were to arrange an introduction to someone who may be appropriate.



Throughout Jewish history, the community took primary responsibility for making *shidduchim* (connecting people to each other). It is only in a market society where each person is forced to fend for her or himself that this practice disappears. While we do not want to return to the days when arranged marriages coerced people into relationships that were stultifying (particularly to women), we do want to create a community in which "making matches" is encouraged. For this reason, at each of our events we dedicate some time to introducing people to each other and we encourage each member of our community to take responsibility to help singles who are interested to meet one another.

Couples often find it easier to socialize with other couples, but we encourage couples to invite singles to their homes for *Shabbat* and holiday meals.

Some people are single because they want to be and we respect this option as well. We are creating a community in which singles feel safe and supported so that they do not feel pressured to be in relationships that may not be right for them. At the same time, as a community we support long-term loving relationships. We do not accept the model, rampant in American society, that sees the autonomous individual capable of standing alone, as the fundamental building block for a healthy world. Rather, we believe the healthy individual is one who can acknowledge the human need we have for loving relationships, and can allow herself or himself to experience the vulnerability that a loving commitment to another entails.

BEYT TIKKUN is a Hallachic Community

We have a particular approach to the world. This synagogue is committed to the perspectives articulated in two works by Michael Lerner: *Jewish Renewal: A Path to Healing and Transformation* and *The Politics of Meaning: Restoring Hope and Possibility in an Age of Cynicism*. People do not have to agree with every thought in these works in order to join the synagogue; but, BEYT TIKKUN is committed to the perspectives articulated in these books, in its programs, educational system, and religious practice.

We are a hallachic community bound by Jewish law. For example, we will not have non-kosher food brought to synagogue events. We discourage wasteful and extravagant spending of money on Bar or Bat Mitzvahs. That money could be used to feed the hungry. We do not allow the video-taping or photographing of religious services on Shabbat or holidays.

Our understanding of Jewish law is shaped by the evolving interpretations of the traditions that have been

dramatically influenced by Jewish feminism, by Jews who have learned other spiritual traditions, and by Jews who have been struggling to make Judaism a living reality in their lives rather than a set of laws experienced as constraints.

Rabbi Michael Lerner is our *posek* (interpreter of Jewish law) and he has the ultimate authority on such matters of dispute within the congregation.

The Politics of Meaning

Our synagogue is part of the politics of meaning movement. This is not politics in any conventional sense. We do not endorse political candidates or identify with a political party. We discuss politics in our synagogue, analyze current affairs, and are involved in a movement to challenge the ethos of selfishness and cynicism in American life. We are committed to creating “a new bottom line” in our society so that social practices, institutions and decisions are judged efficient and productive, not only to the extent that they maximize wealth and power, but also to the extent that they tend to create loving and caring human beings who are ethically, spiritually and ecologically sensitive. This concern shapes our Jewish education programs, social action activities and our community rituals.

We are building a community of people who challenge the ethos of selfishness and materialism in American society. We work to maximize love and caring, as well as ethical, spiritual, and ecological sensitivity.

We are passionately committed to ending wars, violence, poverty, homelessness and unemployment. We want a society that provides universal health care, housing, jobs, child care, and adequate benefits for seniors. We dedicate our energies to the struggles against racism, sexism and homophobia.

We reject the notion that the only “real oppression” is economic oppression. In this society most people suffer from a spiritual deprivation of meaning enforced by a competitive marketplace which rewards selfishness and materialism and encourages a deep and widespread cynicism. The deprivation of meaning is just as real as the deprivation of economic or political rights—and the resulting oppression of middle-income people is central to our concerns. In our community, we reject the “comparative victimology” which insists that one group is “more oppressed” than another and focus instead on our common humanity and on healing our common and socially-rooted pain.

There is a coercive “political correctness” that is popular in the Bay Area and that leads people to feel that their political work must be involved in the championing of “the most oppressed.” Our view is that it is equally important to develop a deeper understanding of the ways in which our own lives have been mis-shaped and undermined by the dominant ethos of selfishness and materialism and by the systematic denial of our spiritual needs. When people fully understand this, they will understand why they personally need to live in a society that treats every human being as created in the image of God. That understanding leads us to a deeper commitment to the healing of our planet and to challenging the globalization of selfishness that manifests in unfair global economic arrangements, destruction of our environment and an unwillingness to share what we have with others.

Israel

As Jews, we are strongly committed to Israel and to the physical security of its people. We take great pride in the accomplishments of Israel and support it against its enemies.

It is precisely our special connection to Israel and its people that makes us particularly committed to articulating criticisms when they may be appropriate. We believe that

Jewish national self-determination is an inviolable right at this moment in history, given the history of Jewish oppression. Yet, we believe both as a matter of ethics and a matter of rational self-interest and survival that Jewish national sovereignty cannot be secure if it is won at another people's expense. So, we support the creation of a demilitarized Palestinian state. As a community, we are engaged in public actions to support the forces of peace in Israel.

It is our obligation as Jews to speak out against Israeli policies that violate our best understanding of Judaism's commitment to seeing every human being as created in the image of God and as equally valuable and deserving of respect. Jewish pain and Jewish suffering is no warrant for the oppression of others.

We are outraged at acts of terrorism against Israelis and we condemn all such acts. Whenever an Israeli is hurt by acts of violence, our community feels pain. We also feel pain at the daily humiliations and denial of freedom imposed on the Palestinian people. We are outraged at the killing and maiming of Palestinians, whether by the Israeli military forces occupying the West Bank or by Jewish settlers who are unwilling to grant to Palestinians the same rights to national self-determination that we Jews rightfully claim for ourselves. We are critical of the widespread violation of human rights that has accompanied the occupation and supportive of Israelis who refuse to participate in those activities. We believe it is the responsibility of American Jews to speak out on these issues with the same vigor that we spoke out against violations of human rights in the countries where we do not live (e.g., Tibet, Chechnya, China, Colombia, Bosnia, Rwanda, Iran, Iraq, Syria, etc.).



We steadfastly oppose the use of state power to coerce religious behavior or to privilege orthodox variants of Juda-

ism over other kinds of Jewish life. We are critical of governmental moves that restrict the rights of Reform, Conservative, Renewal, or Reconstructionist Judaism within Israel or that invalidate the legitimacy of conversions performed by rabbis from these strands of Judaism.

We hope to build people-to-people ties with many Israelis, to encourage our own members to learn Hebrew and to visit Israel frequently, and to encourage Israelis to visit us.

The Spiritual Practice of This Community

Our goal is to have every member of the BEYT TIKKUN community involved in some arena of personal and communal spiritual practice. Here is what we have in mind:

Shabbat (the Sabbath) is not simply about going to synagogue. It is a 25-hour spiritual, meditative, psychological and intellectual process which involves a withdrawal from the normal consciousness of domination and control over time and space. On *Shabbat* we enter into a consciousness that is focused on awe, wonder, amazement, celebration, pleasure (through food, sex and intellectual exchange), aloneness and community. We are building a community of Bay Area people who support each other in experiencing *Shabbat*.

For this congregation, our mutual interconnectedness is the fundamental reality on which we wish to build.

The Personal Practice of Our Community

We foster as many spontaneous acts of love and caring as possible—coupled with a compassion for each of us and a recognition that most of us will fail to fully embody this ideal most of the time.

We believe that the world cannot be healed solely through individual healing. Social transformation is essential. Nevertheless, we want to foster a community in which we each do what we can to embody our highest ideals.

Here are some things which we seek to develop in ourselves:

GMILUT CHESED—acts of lovingkindness.

TZEDAKAH—a life of selfless giving, letting go of attachment to possessions and power, and giving not for the sake of recognition but because “giving to give, not to get” is the best way to live.

KINDNESS TO ANIMALS—one of the reasons our community has chosen to have only vegetarian events.

CARE OF PEOPLE IN NEED—not just Jews, but everyone.

SHALOM BAYIT—to make peace in our relationships and in the world.

INTERNAL AWARENESS—of one’s own processes, of others’ needs, and of one’s own place in the universe, developed through meditation and self-reflection.



RECOGNIZING GOD IN EVERY HUMAN BEING—and acting on that knowledge.

JOYFULNESS—a life in which we can playfully and happily affirm ourselves, each other, and the universe.

OPENNESS TO PLEASURE—allowing ourselves to experience the joy of physical, spiritual, ethical and intellectual pleasure.

Daily Spiritual Work

We hope our members will take some time each day to center themselves and check in with the universe, with God, with their own deepest selves, and with the Jewish tradition. At some future point we may have a daily prayer service. In the meantime, we hope our members will shape a time each day in which they can reconnect.

Fighting *Lashon Ha’Ra*—Hurtful Speech about Others

One of the most destructive features of contemporary life is the way people put each other down. The old ditty “words can never hurt me” was decisively rejected by our rabbis, who thousands of years ago forbade Jews to engage in hurtful speech towards others. Even true statements can be needlessly hurtful. Jewish religious law not only forbids us from participating in such speech, but from listening to it. Indeed, listening to such speech can be just as destructive to our souls as actually initiating it. One of the goals of BEYT TIKKUN is to build mutual support for each other, and to resist the tendency of people to spread negative thoughts or feelings about others or about themselves.

Of course, *lashon ha’ra* does not preclude us from engaging in constructive criticism. This is best done face-to-

face with the person we are critiquing, and in circumstances in which the person has been asked if s/he feels safe and ready to hear critical feedback.

The prohibition against *lashon ha'ra* does not prohibit us from critiquing public officials or leaders of political movements for mistakes in their political activity. It does, however, suggest that even for these public officials our primary focus should not be on the details of their personal lives, but only on their political actions.

If we can create a community which struggles against *lashon ha'ra*, we will be making a real and very concrete contribution to the healing of our planet.

Making our Spiritual Practice Real

In the first year of BEYT TIKKUN, our central focus was on the creation of a regular *Shabbat* service. Now, the goal is to deepen our *Shabbat* observance and encourage each individual to engage in personal spiritual practice. We encourage each member to be engaged in these practices:

Prayer and Meditation

Our goal is to help our members integrate some form of prayer or meditation into their daily lives. We provide instruction and resources so members can learn more about Jewish prayer, meditation and *Shabbat* observance. Here are some options:

Pray or meditate for 15 minutes every day. It's a perfect way to begin the day that can give a renewed sense of purpose and mission to life.

Dedicate each *Shabbat* to a full 25-hour *Shabbat* experience—switch from the weekday mode of control and domination to the celebration of the universe. Our Friday night services and *Shabbat* morning Torah study are an integral part of this process.

Community Participation

Celebrations: As our community has grown, Beyt Tikkun has developed unique rituals for life events. We joyfully share conversions, birth and pre-wedding celebrations, baby namings and bar/bat mitzvot.

Shabbat Dinners have become an integral part of our community life. These are frequently informal potlucks and vary in their observance of ritual. We make a special effort to invite new members to these dinners.



Annual Seder: Beyt Tikkun's annual seder is held the second night of Passover. More than 200 congregants and members of the greater Jewish community gather to celebrate with a vegetarian dinner and discussion of the meaning of the holiday.

Retreat: Each spring, Beyt Tikkun holds its Shavuot Retreat at the Walker Ranch in Marin County. Surrounded by blooming buckeye and rolling hills, we hold services, study the Book of Ruth, hike, swim and enjoy ourselves for the weekend.

Education

Jewish education is not only learning the texts and history of our people. It is equally important to learn how to be a spiritually alive and ethically sensitive person, actively involved in social change. We are creating a religious study program for children and adults that reflect these values.

Children's School

We are involved in creating a renewal of Judaism at BEYT TIKKUN, and our approach to educating children reflects the spiritual goals of the community.

Currently we have a Sunday morning class that runs from September through the end of May. Our school is a parent cooperative with each family assisting the teacher one morning a month.

Our main goal is to teach the following values:

- ✧ Awe and wonder at the grandeur of creation
- ✧ Gratitude
- ✧ Generosity and Hopefulness
- ✧ Love and Caring
- ✧ Commitment to the Jewish people and to Humanity
- ✧ A sense of Community: Being a "We", Not Just an "I"
- ✧ Coming to know YHVH and know ourselves in relationship to YHVH
- ✧ Developing an Inner Spiritual Life
- ✧ Learning the prayers, rituals, and *mitzvot* of Jewish life
- ✧ Learning *Torah* and the *Torah* traditions
- ✧ *Tikkun Olam*
- ✧ Joyfulness

We have an innovative educational program. For example, once a month we take our children to participate in a *TIKKUN OLAM* activity that connects them to the ways our world needs healing and transformation. For example, after the destruction of the World Trade Center and the rise of hatred toward Muslims, we brought our children to an Islamic mosque to meet with American Muslims. On another occasion we brought our children to work with seniors in a nursing home facility. This connection between our Judaism

and the rest of the world is just another example of BEYT TIKKUN's commitment to make Judaism "real" in our daily lives and to begin that process with our children.

We welcome your children. Contact 415 575 1432 or email Shul@Tikkun.org.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Program

Beyt Tikkun's Bar/Bat Mitzvah Program is for children of ages 10-13 and for adults. The program does not follow a traditional curriculum. It focuses instead on the development of an individual project by the student who investigates a chosen aspect of Jewish life within the Renewal perspective.

An important part of the program is the student's connection to the BEYT TIKKUN community. An adult member of the community mentors the student in Torah Study and observance of rituals including Shabbat and holiday services. Along with the rabbis, the mentor helps guide the student's spiritual journey.

The course of study is individualized for the student, who might choose, for example, the study of a particular *parsha* of the Torah or an aspect of Jewish history. Additional components of the program include a structured class, primarily taught on Saturday mornings and focusing on the Shabbat experience, attendance at Shabbat services and the learning of prayer-centered Hebrew.

Adult Education

BEYT TIKKUN periodically offers classes and workshops in Judaism, prayer, *Kaballah* and ritual. Classes are offered in response to community interest.

Torah Study:

We meet regularly for Shabbat morning Torah study led by Rabbi Lerner. We discuss the weekly *parsha* from historical, contemporary and personal perspectives. Study is in English. In addition, a women's Torah study group, led by Rabbi Debora Kohn Lerner, meets monthly to discuss the weekly *parsha* from a woman's perspective.

Building a Loving and Compassionate Community

Embodying an attitude of love and compassion is a central goal of our communal life. We strive to see every human being as created in the image of God. This does not mean accepting people who are disruptive, spread negativity, or are destructive, because that kind of tolerance shows disrespect for the other people in the room. What it does mean is that we have to remind ourselves not to be too disappointed in each other or in ourselves and to actively engage with each other to learn the details of each other's lives and to provide mutual support whenever that is possible. We understand that transformation is a slow process and requires nurture and mutual support. BEYT TIKKUN hopes to provide that support.

Beyt Tikkun Structure

- ✧ Rabbi Lerner is the spiritual leader of BEYT TIKKUN. He is the final arbiter of all decisions.
- ✧ A board of directors meets yearly to make financial decisions.
- ✧ A Coordinating Committee consisting of BEYT TIKKUN members chosen by Rabbi Lerner meets monthly. This committee advises the Rabbi on community issues and congregant concerns. The committee also plays a major role in planning BEYT TIKKUN observances and other events.

A Synagogue With a Vision and a Leader

There are several approaches to building a synagogue. In many traditional synagogues the central building block is a board composed of wealthy people who hire a rabbi and cantor and raise money for the venture. Unfortunately, many times this ends up giving excessive power to the wealthy and the message gets communicated that what really counts is having money. In opposition to this, some Jewish Renewal communities have formed around an anti-leadership or ultra-democratic culture that insists on equal power for each person in the group in shaping the community.

Some of these ventures have been wonderful successes. But a problem sometimes emerges: people who have little knowledge, spiritual experience, or psychological sophistication sometimes use the democratic process to work out unresolved personal issues. Or, they displace quite legitimate anger at the wealthy and powerful elites in the larger society, onto people in their own groups with marginally more power than themselves. In these contexts, talented leaders find themselves the targets of unwarranted suspicion and hostility and often withdraw from the community.

We have a different model for our Jewish Renewal synagogue. Our synagogue was not formed by a group that had defined its purpose and then sought a rabbi. Rather it came together around the leadership of Rabbi Michael Lerner and for people who like the kind of prayer services that he leads. The people who have become part of this venture accept Rabbi Lerner's rabbinic leadership. We are cognizant of the fact that Rabbi Lerner is a national leader and is called upon to serve not only our community but an emerging movement of spiritual transformation in American society. We are proud that he is our rabbi and we are his community.

Of course, we are not a sect of blind followers. We use our independent judgment to assess Rabbi Lerner's perspec-

tive. Rabbi Lerner does not put himself forward as a “guru” or “a fully enlightened being.” Nor does he encourage blind faith or abandoning intellect in favor of some spiritual message to which he alone has access. Our study sessions with Rabbi Lerner are full of the rough-and-tumble open intellectual struggle which has made the study of the Jewish tradition such an exciting and stimulating venture through the ages. Nor do all of us agree with all of his political positions. Although the synagogue as an institution is committed to the perspective he articulates in his major books, as individuals we are free to disagree with any particular point. We also learn from each other, and from the important work of Peter Gabel, Michael Bader, Rabbi Debora Kohn Lerner, and others in our community who write in TIKKUN Magazine and who are shaping a national movement—The TIKKUN COMMUNITY. We also learn from the teachings of Judith Plaskow, Susannah Heschel, Marsha Praeger, Zalman Schachter Shalomi, Arthur Waskow, Abraham Joshua Heschel, and many others.

What we attempt to do is to create a context in which Rabbi Lerner is given the real opportunity to lead, to teach, to share his vision, and to shape a spiritual reality. People who join BEYT TIKKUN tend to be people who are excited by the particular kind of religious service, spiritual approach and political worldview articulated here.

We are not creating a community of equals with regard to religious matters. We each enter our community at different levels of knowledge, psychological awareness, and religious education. We are not all equally prepared to participate in shaping the community’s spiritual life. Living in a progressive culture that privileges democratic forms, many people have the expectation that they should get a chance to vote on everything and feel resentful or coerced when they are not included in decision-making. For this reason, we want to make clear that this is not the practice or expectation of this community.

Does that leave the rest of us merely passive? Not at all! We are actively embracing a particular approach not because it has been forced upon us, but because it speaks to us deeply.

We are building a community in which there is plenty of room for participation by the membership on a wide variety of issues. Because we do not have a bureaucratic process, people can get involved in forging the direction of the synagogue in a variety of ways.

Is It Contradictory to Have to Pay for This Kind of Spiritual Life? Shouldn't It Be Free?

To pay to print this brochure, to pay for advertisements to let people know about our existence, to rent facilities to hold our services, to pay for educational programs, to pay for musicians, to pay for a rabbi and for staff who dedicate the time and energy required to build and maintain this organization, answer the phone, send a mailing, and coordinate events, we need to charge money.

And yes, it would be better if we didn't have to pay for it. We feel the same way about many other aspects of life. Health care, food, child care, housing and clothing are all fundamental necessities, and it would be far better if we lived in a world in which no one had to pay for them. The notion of paying for a psychotherapist to give you caring attention or a doctor to provide healing is as disturbing as the idea of paying to be part of a spiritual community. We are sincerely interested in changing the world so that these and other services could be paid for in other ways.

In the meantime, we don't yet live in that world, so we need your financial help to support this community.

Membership

Prayer services are not restricted to members. We invite you to join the community only if you understand and agree with the concept of BEYT TIKKUN and you want to

participate in the process of actualizing this vision. We have a low membership fee and we are committed to building a community of people who share our fundamental vision.

The cost of membership is 1% of your annual adjusted (gross) family income, but not less than \$200 for singles or \$300 for a family. This includes High Holiday services but does not include tuition for Religious School.

BEYT TIKKUN is committed to including all who are interested in sharing our vision. No one will be excluded from membership because of financial hardship. There are opportunities for volunteer work to reduce these costs if that is absolutely necessary for you to join. If you are unable to afford the full membership fee, contact Rabbi Lerner or Rabbi Debora Kohn Lerner.

Send your membership to:

BEYT TIKKUN
2107 Van Ness Ave., Suite 302
San Francisco, Ca 94109
415-575-1432/shul@tikkun.org

B'Shalom

() YES I WANT TO JOIN! I WANT TO BE A PART OF THE COMMUNITY ATTEMPTING TO IMPLEMENT THE VISION FOR BEYT TIKKUN.

Membership fees: 1% of your annual adjusted (gross) income, but not less than \$200 for an individual or \$300 for a family. If you have financial difficulties, please contact Rabbi Lerner or Rabbi Debora Kohn Lerner at www.shul@tikkun.org and explain your financial situation and what you can afford.

Individual Membership Family Membership

Name _____

Birthday _____ Occupation _____

I'm enclosing a check, for my membership dues of _____

Bill my credit card \$ _____

Monthly payments. Bill my credit card \$ _____ a month.

Visa MC AmEx Card

Exp. / / _____

Name on card if different _____

Name of spouse/Domestic Partner _____

Birthday _____ Occupation _____

Names of Children (and Ages) _____

Address _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

Fax _____ E-mail _____

Community, Political, Spiritual or Jewish organizations or activities you are involved

in: _____

(Please fill out additional information on reverse side.)

Synagogue Skills: I can read Hebrew I can lead services in Hebrew I read Torah

I can teach _____

Personal or Family Needs:

Bar/Bat Mitzvah for yourself or your child (age and approximate date) _____

Information and/or course of study for conversion

Wedding

Hebrew naming of a child or adult

Other _____

Special skills I could volunteer to BEYT TIKKUN:

Please feel free to use the rest of this page to give us more detailed information about yourself.