

L E T T E R S

Reimagining Shabbat

In his article, "Reimagining Shabbat" (Spring 2008), Union for Reform Judaism President Rabbi Eric H. Yoffie says, "There is something profoundly wrong when hundreds and hundreds of people attend bar and bat mitzvahs every Shabbat...but rarely does anyone leave saying: 'That was so spiritually fulfilling, I can't wait to come back next week.'"

Interestingly, after my son's bar mitzvah, one of my non-Jewish relatives commented that she was surprised by how spiritual the service had been. Few Jews I know would have made that comment—although, indeed, the Shabbat service was a significant part of what attracted me, a Jew by choice, to Judaism in the first place.

Send letters to the editor to: Reform Judaism, 633 Third Avenue, 7th floor, New York, NY 10017, www.reformjudaismmag.org (click on "Submissions").

This leads me to wonder if part of the problem our community faces might be a kind of blindness. The structure of our liturgy is full of possibilities for spirituality, but because of familiarity we can be blinded to them. Two people attending the very same service can experience it very differently, one being spiritually moved while the other seeing a tired old liturgy.

Part of what we must do, then, is to wake up. Let's wake up the congregation to see what is before them. I've just read through much of the new *Mishkan T'filah*, and there's real potential here to open people's eyes—in particular by giving the congregation the opportunity to see the liturgy they've used for years through new eyes. This opportunity will be lost unless we can draw significant numbers of congregants into studying the text.

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Breast Cancer—The Risk for Men

Your Spring 2008 cover story, "Cracking the Code," began and ended with Jon Entine discussing the transmission of breast cancer risk to his daughter and sister.

What Entine does not mention is that the transmission of genetic risk for breast cancer is an issue for men as well as women, for sons as well as daughters, and for fathers as well as mothers. As risk factors, paternal transmission and maternal transmission of the genetic risk are about equal. So while our societal inclination to ask a woman about breast cancer on her mother's side is central, discussing breast cancer on the father's side should not be thought of as peripheral.

It is true that nowadays breast cancer is common in women and rare in men, but male breast cancer is nonetheless increasing at an alarming rate. Men with a BrCa gene have about an 80-fold high-

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