

Harry in college in 2001), I decided to go with Jane to the Minneapolis Biennial in 2003. To keep me occupied while she attended Outreach and WRJ Board meetings, Jane found me an interesting-sounding two-day workshop: “Deepening Your Spiritual Journey—Jewish Soul Teachings & Practices.”

Led by Rabbi Ted Falcon and Dr. Linda Thal, our group of about fifteen earnest seekers explored beautiful mystical teachings of the Talmud, Zohar, and Kabbalah which mainstream Judaism has not emphasized for centuries. We medi-

tated, discussed the concept of *kavannah* (devotion), wrote prayers... and posed a vital question to ourselves: “If God were to ask me to take the next step on my spiritual journey, what would I have to do?”

This question was the missing link between my earlier spiritual explorations and the ancient religious tradition that tells us to use our God-given intelligence to seek truth.

Suddenly, ecstatically, I understood: The convention theme, *Lech Lecha*, God’s telling Abraham, “Go forth from your native land... to the land that I will

show you,” was speaking directly to me. I had been called home. The rest of the week’s seminars and worship were heavenly. By Shabbat dinner on Friday night, I told our rabbi, Joel Mosbacher, that I was ready to talk to him about becoming a Jew when we returned.



Months later, on April 23, 2004, I explained to a rabbinical panel my reasons for choosing Judaism and my intentions for the future. Then, with Jane, Harry, and other loved ones standing outside the door, I immersed myself in the waters of the *mikveh*—and emerged as a Jew. The cheers from the next room were loud and long. Then we all went to a good deli for corned beef and knishes. Oddly, a couple of Jewish meditators had nicknamed me “Knish” years before. Were they psychic?



These days, I’m told that I’m more observant and do more for my synagogue than some people who grew up Jewish. I guess it’s analogous to immigrants who really desire to become American citizens—they work for it, live it, and feel proud of it.

At Beth Haverim Shir Shalom (since our merger) I’ve become a board member, the immediate past president of Brotherhood, co-chair of the Outreach Committee, liaison for the Social Action Committee, and singer in the choir. I also serve as a regional board member of the Jewish National Fund.

In 2005, Jane, Harry, and I experienced the joy of being in Israel for the first time with twenty fellow congregants, including the rabbi’s family. Then, two summers ago, Jane and I became adult b’nai mitzvah, along with eleven dear friends in our congregation; and in July 2007 we celebrated our 25th anniversary with a “big, fat Jewish wedding” under the *chuppah*, attended by both of our beaming octogenarian mothers.

My Hebrew name, which I was privileged to choose, is *Ma’or Ada’el*, light adorned by God. Now, as a Jew, I strive to reflect God’s light—the very answer to that question I asked as a child: *How are people like God?* □

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