

29th day of the Omer — *chesed sh'b'hod*  
May 8, 2020

Dear Faith Joy,

We both grew up in Livingston, NJ. I was friends with your older sister Debbie, of blessed memory, and you were friends with my younger brother, also of blessed memory. As I recall, we both lived in Boston the year before we applied to rabbinical school and taught at the same religious school. You and I took different paths to the rabbinate — my family had never belonged to a synagogue and I was a self-taught Jew— but we found ourselves in the same rabbinical school class at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, sharing that first year in Israel before you went to study in LA, and I in New York.

Befitting your name, you have been a faithful friend all these years — sharing my *simchas* and my sorrows, *kvelling* in my successes, and most striking and soul-touching to me, remembering to honor my dead along with me — notably, letting me know you are thinking of me on *yahr-zeits*. That is an extraordinary testament to your capacity for great love and caring. I know from my own personal experience that your steadfast and consistent regard has been essential in my own healing from grief, and I know that your congregants, too, have been the fortunate recipients of your constancy and deep *chesed*.

Beyond rabbinical school, you and I also shared the experience of being AJWS Global Justice Fellows in the same cohort, studying together for months in advance of our ultimate trip to Guatemala to see the face of resistance and resilience up close. In these years since, I've witnessed your social justice involvement evolve and bloom. I've been awed and inspired by your energy and commitment to repair of this broken world in which we live. You are a shero!

And though we were not in the same rabbinic cohort of The Institute of Jewish Spirituality, we both share a deep indebtedness, I know, for the spiritual learning and growth that IJS gifted us, along with many opportunities for us to stay connected.

I am excited for you to go forth to your new life in California, close to where I lived after college — serving the community where I taught pre-school, in fact! The connections between us keep intertwining, and I pray that they always will.

I could not be writing to you on a more auspicious day — *chesed sh'b'hod* in the counting of the Omer — often understood as lovingkindness in humility. You exemplify both *middot*/soul-traits so perfectly.

I am honored to call you my friend. You will be greatly missed here on the East Coast, but you go westward with the blessings of so many who honor and treasure you. May you and David and your family go from strength to strength.

Much love,  
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