FOCUS ON
EDUCATION
What skills will our children need in 2030? Will they need to know how to drive? Likely not. Will they need to write in cursive script or type? Or will they need to be able to code multiple computer programs?

The World Economic Forum has identified 16 skills required to succeed in the 21st century. Those traits fall into three groups: foundational literacies, competencies and character qualities. The first category includes literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT) literacy and has been the traditional realm of data measurement.

Educators today have a plethora of testing mechanisms for foundational skills, including the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) standard tests, the CAT test, the Fountas and Pinnell Literacy Continuum, the Ontario Writing Assessment and the Hebrew Proficiency Test, to name a few.

At Robbins Hebrew Academy (RHA), we take an integrated and strategic approach to the collection, use and application of data. No single test can provide a total picture of each student’s level of foundation skill acquisition. Instead, we set personalized learning plans for each student, and then group students according to their benchmarked levels of competency to create groups who will complement each other’s learning. These core competencies lend themselves to data measurement when the purpose of testing and the timely use of the tests are relevant to students and educators.

Standards and standardized tests can be used meaningfully to identify gaps in learning in a group of students. Analyzing the reason why knowledge in a specific area is unusually low can lead to meaningful changes to the curriculum or teaching methods of particular units. A few years ago, teachers noticed that there was a soft area in reading comprehension on non-fiction texts. Based on testing data, we analyzed the focus of teaching this unit and determined that more time needed to be allocated to non-fiction comprehension. A plan was put into place to make changes to improve this outcome, including a more integrated approach to language arts, social studies and science, smaller group instruction, and growth plans for children who were having difficulty in this area. Within a year, students in this cohort excelled in both fiction and non-fiction comprehension and the scores improved substantially.

One of the most groundbreaking areas in education today is in the development of globally relevant “purposeful data” to measure competencies (problem-solving, creativity, communication and collaboration) and character qualities (curiosity, adaptability and leadership). How does a teacher foster creativity in approaching a common problem and fairly evaluate the degree or relevance of that creativity?

There is a fundamental shift taking place between students and teachers engaged in deep learning that necessitates a parallel shift in meaningful assessment of complex 21st-century literacy, competencies and character traits.
Celebrating 30 years of excellence: York’s Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Studies

CARL S. EHRLICH

This year York University will be celebrating its 60th anniversary. For exactly half of that time, it has played host to what is now known, thanks to the generosity of its donors, as the Israel and Golda Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Studies.

Given its relatively young age, York was not the first institution in Canada to offer courses in Jewish studies. However, within a few years of its founding, York started hiring instructors to teach what was then a new field of study at secular universities. York quickly established itself as a leader in the field; and the decision was made in 1989 to establish Canada’s first Centre for Jewish Studies at York. Over the intervening 30 years, the Koschitzky Centre has established itself as one of the world’s leading centres devoted to the academic study of Jews, Judaism, and Jewish culture in all its facets.

While the Centre’s official mandate is to serve as a meeting place for faculty and students studying and researching topics related to the broad field of Jewish studies, its activities and responsibilities are much broader.

On the undergraduate level, the Centre oversees York’s interdisciplinary program in Jewish studies. While the number of majors and minors concentrating in this area has never been enormous, the courses that constitute this program attract students from across the university and serve both to further the education of our Jewish students and to introduce Jews and Judaism to the non-Jewish student community. In this manner the Centre helps to foster interethnic and interreligious understanding and goodwill.

On the graduate level, the Centre oversees the certificate program in Jewish studies, which allows students in various disciplines to gain additional accreditation in the study of Jews and Judaism.

Many of our graduates have gone on to careers in Jewish communal service and leadership, the rabbinate, and the professorate.

Straddling these educational levels is our Jewish teacher education program, offered through the faculty of education, which trains teachers for jobs in both the day school and supplementary school systems. Our graduates may be found teaching the youth of today in Jewish schools throughout Canada and the world.

Being located in the Greater Toronto Area means being part of a larger community. The Koschitzky Centre takes its obligations to the community seriously. Our faculty members and students constantly go out into the community to bring the fruits of Jewish knowledge to a wider audience. In addition, the many diverse programs the Centre mounts are aimed variously at students, faculty, and especially the lay community.

After a few decades of being located in the Torontonian desert, the opening of a TTC station just outside the entrance to our building has (finally!) fully integrated our Centre into the city. It is now easy to reach us and take advantage of what we have to offer, whether coming by car or by public transportation. Drop by and see what we have to offer!

Carl S. Ehrlich is the Director of the Israel and Golda Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Studies at York University.

Israel and Golda Koschitzky Centre for Jewish Studies at York University

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Parenting college-age kids

LAUREN KRAMER
SPECIAL TO THE C.J.N. VANCOUVER

As parents navigating the world without a ‘how-to’ guide, it’s not always easy to know when to step back and when to be actively involved, particularly when our children head off to college. How involved should parents be in their kids’ college education? And where do you draw the line between demonstrating support and interest, versus behaving like a hovering helicopter parent?

A few years ago I attended a talk by Julie Lythcott-Haims, who published the book *How to Raise an Adult* in 2015. Previously a dean of freshmen at the University of Stanford, Lythcott-Haims witnessed an excessive amount of helicopter parenting. “My freshmen students seemed to be like drones in their own lives, driven by someone else and constantly tethered to home and parents by their phones, the world’s longest umbilical cord,” she reflected in her talk.

She described how parents would email asking for their children’s passwords so they could register them for classes, parents calling her “unhappy with the grade a professor gave their child” and parents wanting to know where their kids were at all times. “I would rail against this absurdity,” she said. “I’d give a speech to parents each year, telling them, ‘Trust your child, they have what it takes to thrive. Trust us at the university. And now, please leave!’”

There’s a delicate balance between involvement and over-involvement in a young adult’s college education, says John Ippolito, associate professor at York University’s Faculty of Education. “Kids can benefit from parents’ perspectives and input, but parents have to be careful how they share their perspectives. You can get some really overbearing parents who push their kids to fulfill life goals that kids aren’t ready for, or don’t want to follow. Parents can exert so much pressure that their kids begin to crack, and mental health issues become common.”

How do you know if you’re a helicopter parent? Ippolito says you’re doing okay if you and your kids can have a meaningful discussion about their education. “To me, that’s an indication of a healthy relationship with a child. But if one person in the conversation ends up screaming and running out of the room, something is wrong.”

It’s natural for us to want to protect our kids, Lythcott-Haims said. “We love our children fiercely and we’re fearful about what the world has in store for them. But we make the mistake of thinking we must cloak them in our arms instead of preparing them to be strong out there. So we end up being overprotective, over-directive and doing excessive handholding with our kids – being like a concierge in their lives. We treat our precious kids like bonsai trees – we plant them in a pot, but we won’t let them grow.”

Chances are many of us have been guilty of some helicopter parenting in our lifetimes. So, in the interests of our kids’ growth, here’s how to know when you’re stepping over the boundary – so you can step back in time.

You’re a helicopter parent if…

- You have been known to call your kids’ instructor/professor, suggest they graded an essay/test/exam unfairly, and insist that they reconsider the grade.
- You proofread and edit your kids’ college essays because you want them to get the best results possible.
- You need to be certain your kids are taking the ‘right’ classes and/or spending time with the ‘right’ friends.
- You know your kids’ passwords so you can register them on time for courses.
- You feel compelled to step in and prevent your kids from making mistakes.

If you looked hard at yourself you might admit that you live through your kids and don’t have much of a life of your own.
My son, Josh, is a different person today. Like any adolescent, he struggled with finding his place in the world. What to do with his life? His career? He knew that he wanted a Maserati and to date the blue-eyed girl in his biology class, but the question Josh struggled with most was: “Why does being Jewish matter?”

My own connection to my Jewish heritage weakened over the years, and I was at a loss for an answer. I want my child to live a meaningful and purposeful life. Modern society makes that difficult. We’re bombarded with thousands of messages daily – on social media, streaming platforms, the Internet – wherever we turn. By and large, the messages push material acquisitions as success. So, it’s not surprising that Josh felt bereft and disillusioned.

Things began to change about a year and a half ago when his friend signed up for the Jewish Lifecycle class at Torah High. Josh joined him, hoping for answers. He learned about Jewish ethics, which addressed the deeper symbolic meaning of our traditions. Soon, he began to attend Torah High’s social programs, attending the Hanukkah party and NCSY Canada’s Shabbaton in Niagara Falls, Ont.

One of the most wonderful aspects of his experience at Torah High has been his relationship with teachers. He’s encouraged to open up and ask any questions at all. His demeanour and attitude began to improve.

Torah High has offered Josh something he could not get in public school. He came to appreciate his heritage, while making meaningful connections to other teens his age, who are similarly exploring their identities. He learned that, as members of the Jewish people, we have unique traditions, teachings and responsibilities that are beautiful. We have a homeland in Israel, filled with the artifacts of our collective history.

Josh’s journey has provided me with the occasion to consider my own values. I discovered that it’s important to me that Josh marries a Jewish woman and that the traditions that I grew up with are embraced by my grandchildren. I want them to share in the holidays and have b’nai mitzvah. Our traditions ground us as a family and join us in a chain that goes back thousands of years.

This past summer, Josh went on the Jerusalem Journey (TJJ), NCSY Canada’s flagship summer program. He came home and said, “As a kid in public school, I don’t get to meet a lot of Jewish people. But as soon as I arrived in Israel, I could feel that I was a part of a larger Jewish community. Like I belong somewhere. Like I’m home.”

I’m excited for Josh and look forward to what the future has in store for him. Torah High has boosted his morale. He’s walking taller, prouder and happier. What more could a mother want?
Most of the Jewish students heading to university for the first time are doomed to spend their first few weeks feeling like they’re the only Jew on campus.

In a lonely fog they will wander through the student union building wondering where to get a good corned beef on rye, find a group for a Shabbat gathering or someone to talk to about that professor spewing anti-Israel lies under the guise of education.

That loneliness doesn’t have to last – the lucky ones will find a campus Jewish Students’ Association, a Hillel chapter or a Chabad House to fill their need for a Jewish connection.

A motherlode of information for new Jewish students is contained in the joint Hillel-CIJA catalogue. It’s pages students can find instruction on everything from where to find kosher food, estimates of Jewish population at each school, Jewish campus groups, where to find the synagogue for their denomination and, most important for students of any religious or cultural background, where to find the best on-and-off campus bars.

What’s available for Jewish students varies widely across the country, driven mostly by the Jewish population of a province, a municipality or a specific school.

The Hillel-CIJA guide, for example, warns the estimated 50 Jewish students at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon they’ll find it hard to eat kosher on campus outside of the Chabad House where there’s always a Shabbat dinner waiting. On the other hand, if life starts to beat them down there’s a rabbi available through the chaplaincy service.

Saskatoon has the smallest Jewish population reporting to the Hillel guide. At the other end of the scale is McGill University, where an estimated 3,500 Jewish students give it the largest population in the country.

There, the on-campus Hillel group offers services including recommendations for kosher sandwiches at a nearby Second Cup coffee shop, a Hillel House for students needing some Jewish ambience, a chapter of the Alpha Epsilon Pi Jewish fraternity. (APEI has another 15 chapters across the country) as well as local chapters of Israel on Campus and Birthright Israel. There’s also an on-campus association for LGBTQ Jewish students.

The best known on-campus Jewish student group is Hillel International, the 95-year-old organization based in Washington D.C. with 18 campus chapters across Canada representing 37 schools and more than 22,000 students. In Ontario the organization has active units on nine campuses representing 13,000 students.

Ilan Orzy, director of advocacy and issues management for Hillel Ontario, said the best value of groups like Hillel is “as the central place on campus, with full-time professionals, for Jewish students to have a home on campus where they can meet people of all backgrounds, Jewish and non-Jewish students alike, and contribute to their campus community.”

The students drawn to Hillel, he said, come from a broad range of Jewish backgrounds and experience, but “the common denominator – for most – this is their first time away from home and the first opportunity to develop their identity away from their parents. Having access to an established community of Jewish students on campus … is crucial in supporting their Jewish journey and ensuring a successful campus experience.”

Continued on next page
With the support of the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA), Hillel also helps Jewish students by acting as an advocate on issues such as working with administrators to provide kosher food options to more complicated issues such as the mischaracterization of Israel and Judaism by some faculty.

“When a Jewish student experiences difficulties on campus, CIJA and Hillel work hand in hand to ensure our students can overcome these challenges as best we can. We also enact a number of proactive initiatives to ensure certain challenges are dealt with before they arise such as advocacy training for student leaders, coalition building with other clubs and student unions, and much more.”

Another popular support for Jewish students is the Chabad House found on every campus in Ontario, except for Thunder Bay, started over 50 years ago by Western University philosopher and Chabad Rabbi Yitzchok (Irving) Block. Rabbi Moshe Goldman, Chabad shaliach serving both the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University (they are literally down the street from each other) said while his goals are the same as Hillel’s, an important difference is that he and his wife will be at the universities “forever” while other organizations undergo frequent changes of personnel.

“At Waterloo, one notable success has been the creation of a kosher residence program – students requesting access to kosher food are placed in housing where they can prepare their own meals.

“This way the university is accommodating the needs of the Jewish students to maintain a kosher diet, so we’re happy, the students are happy and the university administration is happy because this doesn’t cost them anything,” Rabbi Goldman said.

A mainstay of Chabad efforts, he said, is the weekly open Shabbat dinner that, at Waterloo, draws up to 100 students a week to a table where they can share time with Jewish students from the entire spectrum of life in a family-like setting.

“Another thing that’s unique about Chabad is we’re all here on campus with families, so when students come over it’s a family environment; it’s a house with a bunch of little kids running around, something that is so homey and comforting and welcoming for students and just facilitates that kind of personal connection we’re trying to achieve,” he said.

Other services include yeshiva studies for students wanting to continue that learning and regular religious services.

“What we hope to accomplish is to create personal relationships and friendships among the students. The biggest impact we can have is to develop a network of personal relationships with students. That’s the best way we can make a contribution to Jewish identity, Jewish continuity, fighting anti-Semitism and intermarriage. Everything we do is just a vehicle to support the relationship between the rabbi, the rebbetzin and the students.”

McGill University in Montreal, has the largest Jewish student population in Canada.

“With other organizations you have a changing of the guard, but once a family moves out to a place, with Chabad they stay there forever so there’s a lot of continuity,” he said. “The university administration gets to know us and we know them and we can leverage that familiarity over time into doing great things for students.”
How to build a no-risk, $43,000 education fund for free

JOSH GREEN
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With Jewish day school tuition being what it is, the cost of post-secondary education may not seem outrageous, but neither is a few thousand dollars a year (or in some cases, much more) anything to sneeze at.

However, with proper planning and patience, sending a child to college or university should not only be affordable, but may not even require setting money aside from your paycheques. In fact, thanks to benefits and grants from the federal government, most parents should be able to amass more than $43,000 to put towards their kids’ post-secondary education, without taking any risk.

As soon as a child is born, parents are able to apply for the Canada Child Benefit (CCB), a non-taxable monthly allowance to help families with the cost of raising children under the age of 18. The size of the stipend will primarily depend on the family’s net household income and the number of eligible children and their ages.

An additional amount is available to provide assistance for children with a mental or physical disability.

For each child under six, families will receive a maximum of about $541 per month. That ceiling is lowered to $456 per month for kids aged six to 17. The amount parents pocket then begins to diminish once their combined net income surpasses $30,450, and based on how many kids they have.

For instance, parents who have their first baby and a net household income of $35,000 can expect $515 a month, while if the same couple earned a combined $60,000 or $100,000, they would respectively get $389 or $243 per month.

This essentially free money can then be leveraged into even more free funds by putting a portion of it into a registered education savings plan (RESP). That’s because the federal government also provides grants of at least 20 per cent on the first $2,500 contributed to an RESP per year, until a lifetime maximum of $7,200 is reached.

Low- and middle-income earners qualify for additional grants of up to 20 percentage points on the first $500 added to the plans per year, though the same lifetime maximum still applies.

By earmarking about $208 a month from the CCB toward the RESP, parents can take full advantage of the grants available without dipping into their own wallets. (If you’re not particularly good at remembering when you need to move money from one account to another, consider automating the process through a monthly transfer.)

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE
After about 14 years, the family will reach the lifetime grant maximum of $7,200, while also having allocated $36,000 in non-taxable child benefits, for a sizable post-secondary education fund totalling $43,200.

It should be noted that those who qualify for the additional grants will reach the lifetime cap earlier – in as little as 12 years. If these people decide not to continue contributing without the added incentive of the grants, their RESPs won’t be quite as large, but could still top out at a respectable $37,200.

These numbers are baseline figures that don’t require any risk and, barring any changes to the programs, promise guaranteed returns. However, if parents are looking to amass even larger education funds, there is a way to do so, although it involves varying levels of risk and could actually result in the opposite of the desired outcome.

That’s because the “savings” part of an RESP is a misnomer, and funds can actually be invested in various financial products, from guaranteed investment certificates to bonds and stocks. The money could also be used to purchase mutual funds or exchange-traded funds, allowing for a more diversified portfolio.

While some may have difficulty taking full advantage of this strategy – the CCB is supposed to help with the costs of raising a child, after all – the principle holds true, and even contributing $500 a year will result in a no-risk education fund that surpasses the $10,000 mark.
Strategies help students cope with a dual curriculum

SHERI SHEFA
SPECIAL TO THE CJN

The pressure on students to do well in school is already high enough for many. But Jewish day school educators are confident that the strategies they use to present an integrated dual curriculum is the best way to help students thrive in both Jewish and secular studies.

Ora Shulman, Associated Hebrew Schools of Toronto’s education director, said that one of the ways in which Jewish schools help students cope with the challenges of a dual curriculum is by “integrating cross-curricular learning through project-based learning.”

Shulman explained that the Makerspace – a collaborative workspace for making, learning, exploring and sharing ideas – is where students are able to explore a variety of subjects in practical ways.

“For example, last year, at our Posluns campus, we had an integrated Jewish Studies – STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) unit, in which the students were introduced to a narrative in the Tanakh about Jewish heroes, and were guided through corresponding experiments in the Makerspace, such as learning how to create a dam. It connected to learning about Joshua stopping the waters of the Jordan when the Jewish people crossed into Israel.”

Bialik Hebrew Day School’s general studies director, Shoshana Taitz, said that although Jewish and general studies are separate, educators at that school also use integrated methodologies and strategies.

“We teach reading and writing using the same system and methodology, so that students recognize the consistency,” Taitz said. “In both general studies and Jewish studies, students engage in problem-based learning and work through the design thinking process. It is a strategy that incorporates both authentic critical thinking and real-world application.”

According to Rabbi Benji Levy – the CEO of Mosaic United, an international non-profit organization that helps Jews develop deeper connections to their Jewish heritage and identities – integrated education is the way to go.

In an online post titled, The Integrated Whole is Greater Than its Individual Parts, he described an assignment he saw in the halls of the Toronto Heschel School that piqued his interest.

“Two colourful clocks were surrounded by several other clocks with similar dials, reflecting times all around the world. Upon closer inspection, I noticed artwork on each of the dials, punctuated by Roman numerals reflecting different halakhically significant times that delineate the Jewish day, including the time one may begin to pray Shacharit and the time one may recite the Shema,” Rabbi Levy wrote.

He added that integrated education “enhances the learning outcomes of general studies by adding cultural significance, interdisciplinary thinking, religious validation and meaning. At the same time, it broadens the Judaic material and creates synchronicity without encroaching on the precious time of Jewish studies in the timetable. The form and method reflect the message to be imparted: that Jewish life and education is a seamless, integrated whole.”

Shulman said that over the past few years, Associated Hebrew Schools has worked to separate Hebrew language studies from Judaic studies:

“Although the two are closely connected, each is associated with different pedagogical best practices. We want to make sure that kids are progressing well with language acquisition, but at the same time, we are also looking at meaningful ways to convey Judaic studies subject matter.”

When it comes to accommodating students who may be struggling in a particular area of study, or with the dual curriculum in general, Bialik’s Jewish studies director, Kathy Friedman, said her school doesn’t take a one-size-fits-all approach.

“It’s a whole-team approach — the teacher, resource teacher and the students co-create learning goals and success criteria. This takes time and care, but there is nothing more important to us than our students’ success. Since we incorporate problem- and project-based learning, students often get deeply engaged in the learning process and it makes the material more accessible and interesting,” she said.

Shulman said Associated Hebrew Schools offers support and extensions based on individual students’ learning profiles for each subject. She said a teacher has the freedom to decide if a student who is excelling in a subject could benefit from enrichment exercises. On the flip side, a child who lacks motivation may be encouraged to choose a topic that he or she could independently explore in depth.

“Our educational objective is to give our students the tools for successful independent learning and to set individual, achievable goals for each child, while taking into account their own interests and passions,” Shulman said.
Navigating the parent-teacher conference

LAUREN KRAMER
SPECIAL TO THE C.J. VANCOUVER

It’s seldom convenient for parents to make it to a parent-teacher conference. Usually they are challenged by carpool obligations, long days at the office, exhaustion, dinner preparation and conflicts with more pleasurable pastimes – say, a fitness class they love. But attend they must, say educators, because parent-teacher conferences are necessary, useful and impactful for everyone involved in their kids’ education.

“Communication between the school and the parents is vital to students’ success and the conference is one element of that process,” says Eric Petersiel, head of school at Leo Baeck Day School in Toronto. “It fits into a long process of open communication around student progress between home and school.” Leo Baeck utilizes a robust computer program that gives parents and students access to their assessments and unit plans from the start of the school at Leo Baeck Day School in Toronto. “It fits into a long process of open communication around student progress between home and school.”

Leo Baeck Day School head of school Russ Klein said, “It’s good for the teacher to have empathy or understanding with,” Klein said. “It’s good for the teacher to know the parent and feel that they’re on their side, that they want their kid to learn and do well. It’s also good for the teacher to know how and if this is a parent that can support their child – because some parents can and others cannot. It gives the teacher insight into what the child is experiencing at home and can create more empathy, which can improve the teacher-student relationship.”

The act of attending a parent teacher conference sends a very strong, impactful message to students about the extent to which their parents value their education. “I’ve read research that indicates that when parents attend, students are more successful academically,” says Rob Dagleish, director of teaching and learning at Gray Academy of Jewish Education in Winnipeg. He iterated that the conference takes various forms. When it’s a tri-conference, involving parent, student and teacher, the student gets to field questions and become part of the conversation. In a parent-teacher context the two stakeholders can have a discussion without fear of upsetting the student.

The conference can be different in high school than it is in elementary school, Dagleish said. “In high school we try to hand over the responsibility for the education of the student. Still, there’s a major benefit for everyone in having parents attend a conference. They get to touch base with the school and remind themselves of the ultimate mission: to make their child responsible for their education.”

Wondering what to expect at the conference? “Expect to be informed and communicated with,” Klein said. “Expect your teachers to give students extra help if and when they need it. And think of your student’s teacher as a partner, rather than an adversary. Too many parents today believe everything their child tells them. It’s much harder to paint someone into a box when you have met a teacher and know that he or she wants something good for your child. When you’re not looking at things from a deficit, I think you get better outcomes.”

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The Jewish Messiah... and Why He’s Not Jesus

Christian missionaries, like Jews for Jesus, claim that Jesus is the Jewish messiah! Why has Judaism rejected this assertion for 2,000 years?

The concept of the Messiah has its foundation in our Jewish Bible, the Tanach, which teaches that ALL of the following criteria MUST be fulfilled before any person can be acknowledged as the Messiah:

**Ingathering of the Jewish Exiles**

When the Messiah is reigning as King of Israel, the Jewish people will be ingathered from their exile and will return to Israel, their homeland (Deut. 30:3; Isaiah 11:11-12; Jeremiah 30:3, 32:37; Ezekiel 11:17, 36:24).

Jesus never reigned as king and the Jews have not yet all returned to live in their promised homeland.

**Rebuilding of the Holy Temple**


The Temple was still standing in Jesus’ day. It was destroyed about 38 years after Jesus’ crucifixion and it has not yet been rebuilt.

**Worldwide Reign of Peace**

There will be universal disarmament and worldwide peace with a complete end to war (Micah 4:1-4; Hosea 2:20; Isaiah 2:1-4, 60:18).

Wars have increased dramatically in the world since the advent of Christianity, many fought in Jesus’ name.

**Embracing of Torah Observance by All Jews**

The Messiah will reign as King at a time when all the Jewish people will observe God’s commandments (Ezekiel 37:24; Deut. 30:8,10; Jeremiah 31:32; Ezekiel 11:19-20, 36:26-27).

Again, Jesus never ruled as King nor are all Jews following all the commandments of the Torah.

**Universal Knowledge of God**

The Messiah will rule at a time when all the people of the world will come to acknowledge and serve the one true God (Zech. 3:9, 8:23, 14:9,16; Isaiah 45:23, 66:23; Jeremiah 31:33; Ezekiel 38:23; Psalm 86:9; Zeph. 3:9).

This, as well, has not yet taken place and we await its fulfillment.

**Messiah Must be From the Tribe of Judah and a Descendant of King David and King Solomon**

The Messiah must be a member of the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10) and a direct descendant of King David and King Solomon (2 Samuel 7:12-14; 1 Chronicles 22:9-10). Genealogy in the Bible is ONLY passed down from father to son (Numbers 1:1-18).

There is no evidence that Jesus really had this pedigree, and the Christian Bible actually claims that he did not have a “birth-father” from the tribe of Judah descending from King David and King Solomon (Matthew 1:18-20).

A Biblical Portrait of the Messiah

All of these criteria for the Messiah are found in numerous places in the Jewish Bible. One foundational example is this prophecy in the book of Ezekiel, Chapter 37:24-28:

And My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd, and they will walk in My ordinances, and keep My statutes, and observe them and they shall live on the land that I gave to Jacob My servant, in which your fathers have lived; and they shall live there, they, and their children, and their children’s children forever; and My servant David will be their prince for ever. Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant, which I will give them; and I will multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in their midst forever and My tabernacle shall be with them, and I will be their God and they will be My people. And the nations will know that I am the Lord who sanctifies Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forever.

Anyone can claim to be the Messiah or a group of people can claim that someone is the Messiah. However, if that person fails to fulfill ALL the criteria found in the Jewish Bible, he CANNOT be the Messiah. According to the Christian scriptures, Jesus seems to have understood this. As he was being crucified by the Romans, he cried out “My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46).

The Christian Rebuttal

In order to deal with Jesus’ failure to fulfill the Biblical messianic prophecies, missionaries argue that he will accomplish them when he returns in the future.

It is important to understand that this doctrine of a “second coming” is an admission that Jesus did NOT fulfill the Messianic criteria. This rationalization for his failure certainly provides no reason for accepting him as the Messiah today. Furthermore, the Jewish Bible does not have a Messianic “installment plan” where the Messiah comes, fails in his mission, and then returns thousands of years later to finally succeed.

Missionaries will claim that because Jesus performed miracles, he must be the Messiah. We, however, have no real evidence that Jesus actually performed any miracles. More significantly, even if Jesus did perform miracles, they would not prove that he was the Messiah. Our Bible never says that we will be able to recognize the Messiah through the miracles that he will do. The Torah actually teaches that even false prophets can have the ability to perform supernatural miracles (Deuteronomy 13:2-6).

The Real Messiah

As Jews, we prefer to wait for the real thing according to God’s promises and guidelines. The Jewish Bible provides a clear and consistent description of what the world will look like when the Messiah comes – and this has clearly not yet transpired. So, we still await the coming of the real Messiah. May he and a true utopian world come soon!

By Rabbi Michael Skobac, Director of Education and Counseling, JEWS FOR JUDAISM © 2019

JEWS FOR JUDAISM is dedicated to countering growing threats to Jewish survival including Christian missionaries, cults, eastern religions, assimilation, anti-Israel propaganda and other challenges to Jewish continuity.

JEWS FOR JUDAISM’s goals are to strengthen Jewish pride and identity and to win back Jews who have been influenced by the above challenges.

We achieve our goals through worldwide Internet outreach, social media, free educational programs, literature and counselling services that connect Jewish people to the spiritual depth, beauty and wisdom of Judaism.

I am so grateful to have discovered the wonderful Jews for Judaism YouTube lectures by Rabbi Skobac. I am a Jew who converted to Christianity in college, but now, because of your online outreach, I have returned to Judaism. Thank you. – Rebecca G.

In a nutshell JEWS FOR JUDAISM keeps Jews Jewish.

Please contact JEWS FOR JUDAISM for free educational materials, to book a speaker for your group, arrange a private confidential consultation or make a tax-deductible charitable donation. Thank you.

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