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ASKABIGAIL

Newsletter

A JEWISH LENS

Dear friends,

Thank you for taking a moment to read the first issue of my e-newsletter. I am thrilled to launch this newsletter, which will inform and inspire you monthly as we explore the world through a different lens.

Over the years, I have written many short pieces about Jewish holidays in Montreal, New York, and Israel. They reflect my struggle with the Jewish faith from childhood to the present and my desire to share from an insider's perspective.

In this month's featured blog, '[Embracing Faith and Renewal: Rosh Hashanah in the Face of Uncertainty](#),' I delve into the essence of this holiday, exploring its rich traditions, profound significance, and the timeless wisdom it imparts.

I believe that shedding light on Jewish life in this manner serves not only to educate those unfamiliar with it but also to dispel any misconceptions surrounding Jewish culture.

I grew up in a confusing religious environment. As a child, I was exposed to both orthodox religious practice and secular education without fully grasping either. My mother kept kosher at home, and my father actively participated in spiritual life. My father, Leslie Laszlo Eliezer Hirsch, who had been irreligious before WWII, became mainstream orthodox after the war.



At ten, on the last day of school, I stood on the top left with my classmates on Saint Urbain Street in Montreal, right outside Bancroft Protestant Elementary School.



At 20 years old, I got my Israeli driver's license.

He wanted his daughters to attend Beis Yaakov, a Jewish religious girls' school, while my mother, Edith Etelka Esther Zoldan Hirsch, was eager to send us to Protestant public schools. She prevailed. I graduated from Bancroft Elementary and Outremont High School in Montreal and attended the Talmud Torah afternoon school and Camp Moshava summer camp.

At 18, I fled from home in the only way I knew how—by transferring from McGill to the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Israel. With my parents' blessing, I spent five years there, immersing myself in the culture and finally graduating with a BA in Jewish History and English Literature.

I also look forward to sharing a series of movie and theatre reviews with you. Whether experienced live or online, films and theatre performances remain among my favourite pastimes. In a secular age, cinema, whether documentary or fiction, remains the pulpit of the people, sharing their joys and woes and using the intimate knowledge of the filmmaker to tell moving and compelling stories.

I want this newsletter to be valuable, so please share your feedback and story ideas. I would love to hear from you.

Shana tova vemetooka,
May you be blessed with a coming year of sweetness and joy.

Sincerely,
Abigail Hirsch