



NEWS RELEASE

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Oshman Family JCC President and CEO Debuts Highly Anticipated Book on Living Jewishly

Book Addresses Fundamental Rifts in Jewish Peoplehood

Palo Alto, CA—September 20, 2021—With its first printing complete in Israel and copies shipped out to booksellers, Jewish agencies and Jewish Community Centers around the world, Oshman Family JCC President and CEO Zack Bodner can breathe a little easier about his first published book. *Why Do Jewish? A Manifesto for 21st Century Jewish Peoplehood* debuted for pre-order in the Number One slot for Jewish Life and Jewish Social Studies categories on Amazon.com. Asked to what he attributes this top-ranked debut, Bodner demurs, "A lot of people are searching for meaning right now and they are turning to Jewish values, rituals and traditions for answers. I suppose they hope this book will speak to them."

Helping create meaning and connection is what Bodner has spent 25 years doing in the fields of academia, politics and Jewish leadership. He has been at the helm of the landmark Silicon Valley Jewish institution, the Oshman Family JCC in Palo Alto since 2013. His ethos of innovation, creativity and spirituality, rooted in industry-leading research, has led to a number of impactful initiatives that have taken hold across North America, in Europe and in Israel.

Bodner is the founder of the Z3 Project, which reimagines Israeli and Diaspora Jewish relations through the lens of a reinvented Zionism for a new age; he is co-founder of the LEAP program which takes young high school graduates on a groundbreaking gap year experience in Israel and abroad with their Israeli counterparts and he is the innovator whose initiatives have inspired countless partnerships and community-building action around the globe.

That the book is highly anticipated by Jewish stakeholders and the Jewish community at large is no surprise. *Why Do Jewish?* serves as an essential roadmap for a meaningful Jewish life that spells out and addresses the most major challenges affecting the Jewish community today, including: dropping institutional affiliation, shifting Jewish ethnography, Israel-Diaspora relations, a broadened search for meaning and belonging and the evolution of technology and science. Bodner brings leading-edge research, professional experience and an accessible, friendly approach to bear on a renewed Judaism whose life force is in contemporary practice rather than identity.

Why Do Jewish? offers a new framework for Jewish living in the form of the acronym TACHLIS, a Yiddish word that means "getting down to business." "That is fundamentally my philosophy," says Bodner. "I always want to get down to brass tacks, and this acronym sums up the most important elements of doing Jewish today in a way that is easy to understand and easy to implement."



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Renowned Jewish influencers have offered high praises for the book. Emmy nominated filmmaker Tiffany Shlain calls *Why Do Jewish?* "...Brilliant and required reading for anyone who wants to explore why Jewish wisdom is so relevant and important for living a good life and building a good society."

Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Anne Kornblut was similarly effusive, noting, "This is a work grounded in research, but also highly accessible...Bodner examines foundational questions around Judaism, anchoring his study in real world examples drawn from a lifetime of working across Jewish experiences. His open-minded approach offers a lively, readable guide to anyone looking to re-examine how they 'do Jewish.' "

For his part, Bodner hopes that his work will start new conversations around a very old topic. "Jewish peoplehood is one of civilization's oldest and longest continuously running operating systems. But that doesn't mean it shouldn't evolve with time, as it has been for millennia. The 21st century presents us with new demands and new challenges. I believe that Jewish peoplehood is up for the test."

A book launch celebration is planned at the Oshman Family JCC in Palo Alto on Thursday, October 14 at 7:00 PM. More information is available at paloaltojcc.org/whydojewish.

Pre-order now available on Amazon.com.

Contact

Zack Bodner is available for speaking engagements. For more information, please visit www.whydojewish.com.

To arrange interviews, please contact:

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About the Oshman Family JCC

The Oshman Family Jewish Community Center (OFJCC) on the Taube Koret Campus for Jewish Life serves the South Peninsula through educational, social, cultural, fitness, sports and other programs. The OFJCC is a multi-generational Jewish neighborhood where all are welcome and which fosters new personal and community connections through rich and rewarding experiences. The OFJCC provides a common ground for Jewish institutions, other local groups, organizations and individuals to work, learn and play together for the betterment of the whole community. The OFJCC's registered trademark is Live Fully®. For more information, visit www.paloaltojcc.org or call (650) 223-8700.

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