

06/02/17

ronfmanTorah: commentary on the Torah that draws on the lives, skills, and insights of our community

[View this email in your browser](#)

Raise Your Hand

Julie Geller '91 | BronfmanTorah | Naso 2017

Julie Geller (Bronfman '91) is a singer/songwriter, public speaker, and music videographer. She and her husband, Josh, are raising three kids next door to the home in which she grew up. You can reach her at julie@juligeller.com.

"Raise Your Hand," by Julie Geller.

In this week's Torah portion, Parshat Naso, the national census that began in last week's portion continues. The census is about standing up, raising one's hand, and being counted as a member of the Jewish people. This song, "Raise Your Hand," was originally inspired by the words of the Passover haggadah: "In every generation, each person is obligated to see him or herself as if s/he went out of Egypt." The idea of nationhood, of having common myths, stories, experiences, traditions, and history - whether one is a Jew by birth or a Jew by choice - moves me deeply.

What gets me in the gut is performing rituals that have been passed down to us - through moments of great terror and persecution - over hundreds or thousands of years. Seeing my son put on tefillin; reading the Torah in the same tune that we have been singing for generations; making a Passover seder; praying with words and tunes that are hundreds, if not thousands of years old. These ancient rituals

06/02/17

are moving. And here's where their power lies for me: in the fact that they have survived - improbably, I must add - over many generations.

Professor Yuval Harari of the Hebrew University touches upon this motif in his [TED Talk](#). He talks about the power of stories to galvanize a community of people to work toward a common goal. Do I care if the root of the story is real, or if our national myths ever happened? Not so much. Do I care about the fact that the Jewish people have committed to building our lives and communities in positive and productive ways around these stories and rituals for generations? Absolutely.

That is why I raise my hand and say, "I am proud to be a part of the Jewish people. Count me in."

Continue the conversation. Send Julie your thoughts: julie@juligeller.com.

P.S.: We're always looking for more dvar torah writers. Interested? Contact stefanie@byfi.org. We look forward to hearing from you.



Copyright © 2017 BYFI, All rights reserved.
You are connected to The Bronfman Fellowship

[Forward to a friend](#)

Our mailing address is:
418 Broadway, 2nd Floor
Albany, NY 12207

[unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)

06/02/17