

Spirituality

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them was not even part of the doctor's thinking," said Naseck, son of Nancy Diaz of Lynn.

At the time, Diaz had a friend who was into holistic cures. The friend recommended green leafy vegetables to enhance the body's blood clotting abilities, and it worked. He also saw holistic Dr. Daniel Kinderlehrer in Newburyport, who recommended a change in diet.

"In two weeks my whole life changed by changing my diet," Naseck said.

It was a turning point. He realized the life of commercial real estate was not for him, and he left New England for San Diego and a different, more spiritual lifestyle. At the same time, he rebelled against Judaism and many of the things that were part of his life in New England.

"At that point, I did not want to connect with Jewish people or Jewish women. I was a rebel. I was not feeling any of this energy-based stuff in the tradition of Judaism or what I left on the east coast.

One Jewish experience, however, remained burned into his memory.

"During a Hillel Academy trip to Camp Ramah in Palmer, Mass., we sang birkat hamazon and another song that stayed



Courtesy photo

Mark Naseck participates in Simchat Torah celebrations in Tzfat.

with me my whole life. I could not remember the name, but I could feel the song and I went into a meditation. That whole weekend had a huge impact. There I could feel something I had not felt before and not again until I got to Israel," he said.

For many years after, Naseck held different jobs, attended school and gained education in yoga, live raw food, meditation and spiritual healing.

He traveled all over, living in Santa Barbara, working as a yoga instructor at Canyon Ranch in Arizona, leading the Ann Wigmore Natural Health Institute in Puerto Rico and other places. After traveling to 26 countries, he met Amrit Desai, a yogi and guru, in Puerto Rico.

It was a transitional time in

his life. He considered starting his own healing center in Puerto Rico when Desai invited him to join him at his ashram in India and be his chef. Naseck saw a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and went.

After two weeks, he had regrets. "At that point in my life, I wanted to bolt because all my personal stuff was in my face."

Suddenly, the things that he asked other people to think about through his work in healing and yoga were haunting him.

"I got to see patterns of my behavior that I didn't like and to see the places I was totally uncomfortable in and challenged by on a personal level," Naseck said.

Ultimately, Naseck "saw another model of how to be," he said. This led him to study Sufism, a mystical dimension of Islam. Through this study, he found himself in a conversation about his own traditions. He talked with Rabbi Michael Shapiro in Arizona, who was also a Torah scribe.

"He told me that when he was writing Hebrew letters and Torahs, he knew he was correct because he could feel the transmission of light behind the letters. This is what the Kabbalists talk about," Naseck said.

The discussion inspired him back to Jewish traditions, and that is how he ended up in Tzfat.

He made aliyah in May of 2010.

"He inspired me. I wanted to learn Hebrew and study and receive transmission of energy from Hebrew letters, so that is what I am doing," Naseck said.

Naseck is not sure if he will become a rabbi, but is studying in Tzfat. He is also continuing with his practice as a spiritual healer, helping patients deal with issues ranging from stress to cancer.

"I see that I can help people find what they are seeking in other ways because they feel the energetic stream of consciousness," Naseck said.

He is also organizing healing retreats in Tzfat and working on a book that ties science and holistic healing methods together based on a series of lectures he has given on these subjects over the years.

Today, he is able to hear the song from Camp Ramah again, Lo Yisa Goy, and other nigunim or songs that connect souls to melodies and transmit energy from student to teacher.

It has been a long a circuitous journey for Naseck, but he has come back to his own tradition and found the things he searched for.

"These things are happening in this tradition," he said.

For more information, visit marknaseck.com.

Topsfield Fair

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This year, Yom Kippur falls on October 7 and 8. Members of the First Baptist Church of Beverly will handle the staffing on those days.

As an incentive bonus, Freedman will provide all volunteers vouchers for free parking, admission and food. No food service experience is necessary.

"It's a great opportunity to meet other Jewish people and help a good cause," said Freedman, who has volunteered at the booth since he was a teenager.

Ken Coburn, now 74, ran operations for the last two decades. "I'm handing over the reigns to someone younger, smarter and better looking,"

joked the Peabody resident.

Coburn has always had a soft spot in his heart for B'nai Brith. "I served as president of two different B'nai Brith lodges, both of which have since dissolved. I originally got involved with the Topsfield Fair B'nai Brith booth because the international organization has a goal of making the world a better place," Coburn said.

He estimates that the booth takes in \$2,000-\$8,000 over the 10-day period. A portion of the proceeds is always donated to B'nai Brith.

"For the past couple of years we have returned the majority of the profits to the booth for upkeep and improvements," said Coburn.

Hy Lemack of Peabody is in his 80s, and he's been working

the fair for as long, or longer, than Coburn. "He likes to work the early shift; assembling bagels and lox. He is an institution and fixture at the B'nai Brith booth," Coburn said.

"Steve Greenstein of Nahant is another longtime volunteer — you'll see him working the grill every afternoon," added Freedman.

Unlike the other food booths at the fair, members of the B'nai Brith booth make a pro-active effort to reach out to those with severe mental and physical disabilities. "We offer these groups half price on their food. We're the only food booth that does that, as far as I know," said Coburn.

Unused leftovers are donated to the Jewish Food Pantry or Haven for Hunger, a local food bank.

Freedman urges members of the community to call or contact him soon to reserve their schedule slots.

"We've always had just enough volunteers. With Marc now at the helm, I'm worried that we might have too many volunteers," mused Coburn.

"I'd be thrilled to have that as a problem," Freedman said.

To volunteer, call 978-681-9889 or email freedmanfamily@comcast.net.



To view a short video about working the B'nai Brith booth at the Topsfield Fair, visit <http://play.goldmail.com/spasr3nojlyq>.

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The Jewish Journal/Boston North, ISSN 1040-0095, an independent, non-profit community newspaper, is published bi-weekly by North Shore Jewish Press, Ltd., 201 Washington St., Salem, MA 01970. Periodical postage paid at Salem, MA. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE JEWISH JOURNAL/BOSTON NORTH, 201 Washington St., Salem, MA 01970.

Circulation to Amesbury, Andover, Beverly, Boxford, Bradford, Byfield, Danvers, Essex, Georgetown, Gloucester, Groveland, Hamilton, Haverhill, Ipswich, Lawrence, Lynn, Lynnfield,

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The Jewish Journal is the recipient of a community subscription grant from the Jewish Federation of the North Shore. Copyright © The Jewish Journal/Boston North (All rights reserved).

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