



Reuven Shlozberg

Born in Lithuania but raised in Israel since the age of 4, I came to Canada for grad school in 2000. I completed a political science PhD, with a political philosophy focus, at the University of Toronto. My dissertation focused on Hannah Arendt and an ethical quest I believe she was on, to understand how people make ethical decisions, in her more philosophical works after witnessing the Eichmann trial and until the end of her life.

Though I finished my dissertation and am proud of it, by that point my heart was no longer in an academic career, and I was recruited by a friend into the policy think tank world. I started as a researcher but transitioned into strategic communications, finding that I both enjoyed it and was good at it. After my think tank closed I had short stint at Ontario's financial regulator, but when the opportunity materialized to come to Vancouver and join the strategic communications team at Vancity, I didn't need to think twice. I've been here since 2020.

My route to Jewish spirituality has been similarly non-linear. I was raised in a household that was entirely secular, and yet had no doubts about being Jewish – and proudly, defiantly so; not surprising, with a whole generation in my family that survived the Holocaust, and a prior generation who did not. It was also an ethical household, not in anything that was said or preached, but in how our parents acted and the choices they made.

But in Israel of the 80s and 90s, there was little concept of Judaism outside the Orthodox and Hasidic movements, and those never sat well with my humanistic and increasingly progressive views. And so it was only in Toronto that I discovered the existence of a progressive, egalitarian, ethically and environmentally driven, Judaism, and thereupon began my spiritual movement to where I am today, an Or Shalom member. Jewish learning, in particular, has long fascinated me and has been central to this journey.

Otherwise, I very much enjoy hiking, and love Vancouver for the option to have great hikes reachable by public transit (I don't drive). I read science fiction – though not as much as I would like. I listen to a lot of music, from classical to jazz to classic rock, psychedelic rock and progressive rock. But since COVID I've been especially exploring the many cultural rhythms and sounds that went into the musical melting pot of Israel – classical Indian music, and traditional Arabic, Andalusian, Greek, Balkan/Roma, Latin American sounds, African music.