



HIV/AIDS / Sexual Health and Britain's Faith Communities

A Special Health Alliance
23 March 1994



THE JEWISH AIDS TRUST



One Family
One Community
One Responsibility

About the Jewish AIDS Trust

The Jewish AIDS Trust was established in 1988 to provide the Jewish community with education, counselling and support in connection with HIV infection and AIDS. It extends its services to the entire spectrum of the Jewish community.

What is AIDS?

AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. It is caused by a virus called the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).

The virus attacks the body's defence system and stops it fighting certain infections and diseases. Infection with the virus is for life. HIV positive people can infect others.

Being HIV positive is not the same as having AIDS. People with HIV may look and feel perfectly well, especially during early infection. Most HIV positive people will probably go on to develop AIDS, often many years later.

A person is said to have AIDS when their defence system is so low that it is unable to fight the infections that an otherwise healthy person would resist.

HIV is present in body fluids, such as blood, semen, vaginal secretions and breast milk and can be passed on in three main ways:

- ◆ By unprotected sex with an infected person
- ◆ By sharing needles and syringes with an infected person
- ◆ From an infected mother to her unborn or new born baby

Before 1985, a few people contracted HIV from infected blood and blood products. Blood in the UK is now tested and blood products are treated to prevent this.

Services of the Jewish AIDS Trust

Counselling

Confidential counselling by experienced counsellors, on a face-to-face basis, for people with HIV/AIDS, their partners, family and friends.

Education

The Jewish AIDS Trust offers programmes and workshops tailored to the needs of the individuals and groups within the community. The education team provides AIDS Awareness and other workshops for organisations from youth groups and schools to universities, and from rabbis to social welfare organisations.

Telephone Helpline

A confidential service offering information, support and counselling around HIV and AIDS. All the helpline volunteers are trained in aspects of HIV/AIDS and its implications.

Financial Support

Assistance to people facing hardship due to an HIV/AIDS diagnosis.

Volunteers

Volunteers have been central to the Jewish AIDS Trust since its inception. Offers of help across the range of our activities are always welcome. An in-depth knowledge of HIV and AIDS is not a prerequisite to becoming a volunteer. Training and support on a regular basis will be provided. Contact either office for an application form.

Funding

The Jewish AIDS Trust is a registered charity which relies for its funding on grants and donations from a variety of sources. Contributors have included: Barnet Health Agency, the National AIDS Trust, North Thames Regional Health Authority, various charities, synagogues, youth groups and individuals.

The Jewish AIDS Trust
HIV Education Unit, Colindale Hospital,
Colindale Avenue, London, NW9 5GH.
Tel: 0181 200 0369

BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE.

FULL NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

POSTCODE: _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____

PLEASE TICK APPROPRIATE BOX.

- ☐ I WOULD LIKE TO BE A FRIEND OF 'JAT'
(Individual subscription £30.00 per year)
- ☐ I WOULD LIKE TO BE A FRIEND OF 'JAT'
(Joint subscription £55.00 per year)
- ☐ I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A DONATION OF £ ____
- ☐ DEED OF COVENANT (Please complete overleaf)
- ☐ GIFT AID (£250.00 Minimum)

Cheques should be made payable to 'The Jewish AIDS Trust'

Deed of Covenant & Gift Aid

If you pay UK Income tax, the JAT is able to reclaim Income Tax at the basic rate (25%) thus increasing the value of your gift by one third, at no extra cost to you.

If you pay higher rate tax, your tax office will give you extra relief i.e. a donation of £500.00 will realise £666.67 for the Trust and will cost you £400.00.

For donations made by Gift Aid, we will arrange to send you an Inland Revenue form for which you can certify that you have made the gift and on which you can give certain details to enable the Inland Revenue to verify your tax status. We can then reclaim tax as though the sum you give us is nett of tax.

Registered Charity No. 327936

You cannot contract HIV during everyday contact or from:

- ◆ Shaking Hands
- ◆ Sharing a Kiddush Cup
- ◆ Blowing a Shofar
- ◆ Using the Mikveh
- ◆ Brit Mila
- ◆ Coughs and Sneezes
- ◆ Insect Bites
- ◆ Sharing Towels
- ◆ Sharing Food

Jewish teachings tell us...

- ◆ to respect our fellow human beings (Chesed V'emet) behaving with kindness and compassion, accepting that HIV and AIDS are no respecter of religion, race or nationality;
- ◆ it is our duty to care for the needs of the sick (Bikkur Cholim);
- ◆ as Jews we must be responsible for each other (Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh Bazeh);
- ◆ we are obliged to preserve life (Pikuach Nefesh);
- ◆ we should acknowledge and endeavour to understand the lifestyles of others, putting ourselves into their position (Shituf Betsa'ar).

As such, HIV and AIDS is an issue for
the Jewish community.



The Jewish AIDS Trust

(Registered Charity No: 327936)

Head Office:

HIV Education Unit
Colindale Hospital
Colindale Avenue
London NW9 5GH
☎ (0181) 200 0369
Fax (0181) 905 9250

Branch Office:

Bridge House
6 Mildmay Road
Ilford
Essex IG1 1DZ
☎ (0181) 553 9983
Fax (0181) 478 5189

Administration in both offices:
10am to 4pm Monday to Friday
(3pm winter Fridays).

Telephone Helpline

☎ (0181) 200 0369
7.30pm to 10pm
Mondays

This leaflet has been supported by:
"The Jewish Community Allocations Board
funded by Jewish Continuity."

February 1995

THE JEWISH AIDS TRUST



One Family
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HIV and AIDS
in a
Jewish context

was established as a charity in the Jewish community with educational support in connection with it. It extends its services to the wider community, and is not allied to the Jewish AIDS Trust's Headquarters in London. It also has a Branch in London. It currently offers the

following programmes and work for individuals and groups with a training team, led by the Training AIDS awareness workshops for groups to schools and universities and social welfare organisations.

Confidential information, support and HIV and AIDS is currently available between 7.30-10.00 p.m. All aspects of HIV/AIDS and its

including confidential face-to-face counselling for HIV infection or AIDS, as well as support for families. Appointments can be made by telephone helpline service, or by email during office hours.

From time to time people with HIV/AIDS require specialisation for greater or lesser severity of the disease they will often be able to complete even part-time work. The Trust is adequate to meet the day-to-day needs in this situation, and they are, very easy to obtain. The Jewish AIDS Trust make financial grants to Jewish people with HIV infection or AIDS. For further information contact the Director.

continues to rely on voluntary support from the Jewish community. If you wish to provide your own support for its work by becoming a Friend of the Jewish AIDS Trust contact the Director

The word AIDS is an acronym standing for *Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome*. AIDS is not itself an illness, but represents a condition of impaired immunity in which a person is vulnerable to a whole range of potentially life-threatening illnesses. Immunity is compromised by a specific virus, HIV: the *Human Immunodeficiency Virus*.

The routes by which HIV is transmitted are now well known. The virus is not contagious - that is to say it cannot be acquired by ordinary social contact with an infected person. You cannot become infected by shaking hands, embracing, blowing a shofar, using the mikvah, or sharing a kiddush cup, cutlery and crockery, with an infected person. HIV is *infectious*, however. Specifically, it must be transferred from an infected person's body fluids into another's bloodstream, the infectious body fluids being infected blood, seminal and vaginal fluids, and breast milk.

For these reasons certain activities, such as unprotected penetrative sexual intercourse with an infected partner or sharing "works" (needles and syringes) with an infected injecting drug user, are considered risky. Earlier in the AIDS epidemic people with haemophilia and patients receiving blood transfusions were at risk of HIV infection through contaminated blood supplies. Blood supplies in Britain have been screened and blood products treated since 1985 to prevent this.

Once inside the bloodstream, HIV attacks the so-called Helper *T* cells, which are an important component of the human immune system. A newer theory proposes that HIV may also cause the *T* cells to attack each other, rather than destroy the virus itself. But whatever the exact mechanism, as the *T* cells are destroyed, a person becomes vulnerable to a range of opportunistic infections.

As yet, there is no cure for HIV. However, there are now a variety of medical treatments and alternative therapies available to combat these infections, once HIV has been diagnosed. HIV infection and AIDS are not an automatic sentence of death.

epidemic has been presented as a marginalised groups such as drug users and gay men, there has often been a shrug off its implications with the problem, it has nothing to do with it. It has even been said that people suffer their suffering upon themselves, a derision from society at large. Justified by reference to Biblical prohibition of a sexual act as an "abomination".

It is actually incorrect in one major respect. 90% of HIV transmission is via heterosexual intercourse and it is very probable that this is the case in the epidemic in Britain and the coming decade.

For many Jews a conflict between two values, the love for the Torah on the one hand and the Jewish ethical principle of saving our fellow human beings.

Halakha, which mirrors the philosophy of the Talmud, is to argue that a caring and loving attitude towards people with HIV infection or their friends, is fully compatible with the highest Jewish commandment to the highest Jewish

P*ikuach nefesh* - the saving of a life - is probably the highest value in Judaism. Lifesaving is, indeed, a *mitzvah* so important that it must be pursued relentlessly, even if other religious mandates have to be set aside. Thus, in order to save a life we are not merely permitted, but even *obliged*, to break the *shabbat*, and our rabbis assert that any act devoted to saving a life is to be prized above all.

The AIDS epidemic represents an unparalleled challenge to the Jewish commitment to *pikuach nefesh*. According to the World Health Organisation, 17 million people are currently infected with HIV worldwide, and 30-40 million are expected by the turn of the century. HIV infection and AIDS have brought death and dying into the lives of individuals, families and communities on such a scale that lifesaving seems an impossibility - all the more so because a cure for HIV infection is estimated to be at least ten years away! In these circumstances we may feel overwhelmed by the enormity of the AIDS epidemic. We feel powerless. What can we do?

Well, for one thing - if we cannot cure, we can at least continue to *care*. To do the very best we can to ameliorate the physical and emotional pain of being diagnosed with an AIDS - related illness and to help ensure that a person dies with dignity and grace. Thus, we can engage in practical activities which will contribute to such a programme - giving time to help establish an AIDS hospice, for example, lending a sympathetic and non-judgmental ear to someone who is in emotional distress, or nursing a person who is terminally ill.

Secondly, we can remember the saying, "Prevention is better than cure". *Pikuach nefesh* can be deemed to start from this point: with educational campaigns to inform people about HIV and AIDS, and encouraging our friends, relatives, acquaintances, children to think about - and *practice* - safer sexual relationships.

And thirdly, if you feel that you yourself are unable or unwilling to become personally involved in such a way, your support for those who are can also be vital. Statutory sector provisions for people with AIDS are rarely adequate, and voluntary organisations are always hungry for money. Perhaps *that* could be your contribution to *pikuach nefesh*.

requirement of *shituf betsa'ar*, a leap of the imagination so temporarily in the interior is what is meant by the act of

h to be aware of and respon- who resemble ourselves very , for example, characteristics ss and so on. When it comes t from ourselves, empathy fficult it can be, for example, e interior world of our child! ay from people who reflect ple from alien backgrounds e may be tempted to respond t as a "type". *Shituf betsa'ar* s that that other person - that ening person - is above all a s to be prized as much as we prize our own individuality.

iving with HIV infection or t indeed from ourselves. We y, or if this woman prostitutes c. But in the end, he or she is as we ourselves are. In *The* eare has Shylock cry out in es? Hath not a Jew hands? es, affections, passions?... ame winter and summer as ainder that as members of the uishable from gentiles. In just ual people, people who use AIDS, are indistinguishable ick us, do we not bleed?"

s us to remember this, and to offering we may cause by our attitudes, and our fear and nsitive to these dynamics and IDS as we ourselves would their position.

The Biblical concept of *chesed ve'emet* requires us as Jews to respond to our fellow human beings with lovingkindness and truthfulness or integrity. This obligation has special significance in the worldwide AIDS epidemic.

Emet, the principle of truthfulness and integrity, requires us to confront the facts of life, however difficult or painful these may be. And first of all we must be honest with ourselves. It is dishonest to assert that AIDS is not an issue for the Jewish community. This is to indulge in wishful thinking to the effect that there are no Jewish gays or drug-takers, that heterosexual Jews never have "illegitimate" sexual relationships, or that we are somehow protected from AIDS by our status as God's Chosen People. *Emet* - honesty - not only forces us to acknowledge that the real lives of Jewish people can often fall short of Jewish ideals, but also that "holier than thou" does not mean "healthier than thou". The righteous also suffer, as the Book of Job attests. HIV is an Equal Opportunities Virus, and is no respecter of religion or "religiosity", let alone age, sex, race, nationality, or sexual orientation. It is not *who you are* that puts you at risk from HIV infection; it is *what you do*.

The principle of *chesed* - of lovingkindness - indicates the attitude towards people with HIV infection or AIDS that we, as Jews, ought to adopt. We are required to be humane, compassionate and caring, and to eschew expressions of fear, hatred, condemnation and disgust. It helps if we can resolve to regard HIV infection as a disease condition, rather than as a disgrace. *Chesed* imposes on us the obligation to treat people with HIV/AIDS in precisely the same manner as we would treat people with other, possibly fatal, diseases - to ameliorate their suffering, to provide consistent and loving support, and to do all we can to ensure that they are not additionally burdened by individual or social prejudice and discrimination, including our own.

Over the centuries Jews, as a scapegoated minority, have frequently been found at the forefront of social struggles for human rights and individual dignity. *Chesed ve'emet* requires us to extend that never-ending campaign in a new direction, and to inspire our society with a perspective on HIV and AIDS which reflects the eternal Jewish principles of compassion and truth.

that "Each Jew is responsible
Rabbis also remind us that this
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absolutely not!" often invites
all!!" - the last thing we want.

Bikkur *cholim* (caring for the sick) is one of the most
important obligations in Judaism, and indeed our
daily liturgy includes this *mitzvah* on its list of
commandments which promise continued reward. It
implies above all the value of active caring for another
person, as opposed merely to the *intention* to care.

HIV/AIDS can be a particularly isolating condition.
Too often it is accompanied by rejection - by families,
friends and co-workers. But people can be rejected indi-
rectly as well: by a family's denial that a person has HIV or
AIDS, or by the difficulty they experience in speaking
about it. Sometimes, feeling scared or ashamed to speak
about their condition, people with AIDS will isolate them-
selves. Isolation is further increased by physical helplessness,
reduced control over one's own body, and by a loss of
hope. All these can combine to create a physical and emo-
tional environment in which *bikkur cholim* may be the most
significant act of intervention from which a person with
AIDS can benefit.

Bikkur cholim demonstrates unmistakably that AIDS
has not isolated a person from the circle of their com-
munity. Although they may feel - and indeed may be -
imprisoned by their own bodies, by medical apparatus and
by "doctors' orders", *bikkur cholim* can provide them with
a sustaining sense of human connectedness.

Indeed, *bikkur cholim* is an extension of Judaism, for
at an important level it represents a declaration of a Jew's
obligation to imitate God's caring and compassionate
nature. In the context of the AIDS epidemic there is one
particular Divine attribute which is especially worthy of
imitation: God as *Tsur Yisrael* - the Rock of Israel - His
strength and dependability. The *mitzvah* of caring for a per-
son with AIDS can likewise generate feelings of stability
and safety. For such a person, as well as for family mem-
bers, friends and caring visitors, the dependability of
others can often be of vital importance.

As with all *mitzvot*, visiting the sick is not a one-off
"good deed". The true reward for performing any *mitzvah*
is the opportunity to do another. For the person with AIDS,
the ability to rely on *bikkur cholim* as a continuing example
of Jewish activism can result in a healing sense of belong-
ing to a unique family: *Am Kedushah*, the Jewish people. A
people who really *care*.

n olam reflects a Jewish creation.

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o be paid for God's benefi- e fragmented, and its sparks the entire universe. The life- every individual is to gather again (*tikkun olam*) so united.

s Jews to repair our evident- does this mean in the context In fact, the AIDS epidemic larly demanding agenda. certainly include both the and our *institutions*, as per- ionate and humane - as pos- e, we are required to bring hatred or fear, we are oblig- ourage. Where there is ired to bring relief.

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Donations may be sent to the Jewish AIDS Trust office. Cheques, KKL and CAF vouchers should be made out to the "Jewish AIDS Trust".

Donations in the form of Gift Aid (minimum £250) or by Covenant are also most welcome. If you pay UK Income tax, the Jewish AIDS Trust is able to reclaim Income Tax at the basic rate (25%) thus increasing the value of your gift by one third, at no extra cost to you.

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You can also become a "Friend of the Jewish AIDS Trust"
Single subscription £30.00 per year
Joint subscription £55.00 per year.

Please contact Head Office for the relevant forms.

Volunteering

Volunteers have been central to the Jewish AIDS Trust since its inception. Offers of help across the range of our activities are always welcome.

An in-depth knowledge of HIV and AIDS is not a prerequisite to becoming a volunteer. Basic training will be provided. Contact either office for further details and an application form.



AIDS Trust

ty No: 327936)

Office:
ation Unit
Hospital
Avenue
W9 5GH
00 0369
905 9250

Office:
House
ay Road
ord
G1 1DZ
53 9983
478 5189

in both offices:
onday to Friday
r Fridays)

Helpline
00 0369
to 10pm
days

by the Department of Health

er 1994

THE JEWISH AIDS TRUST



HIV and AIDS in a Jewish context

Rabbi Lionel Blue * Reverend Malcolm Johnson * Sister Mary Bozena

Canon Peter Larkin * Fr Phillip Lloyd * Phillip Groom * Dee Cash

POSITIVELY SPIRITUAL

A Weekend
away for those
living with HIV,
their partners,
carers & friends.

Exploring together
another dimension to
life

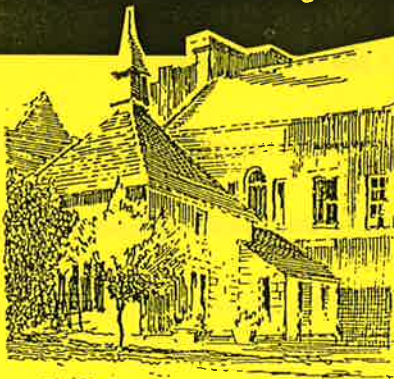
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beautiful
surroundings.
- * Relaxation
- * Discussion
- * Worship
- * Outings
- * Massage

**Friday 28th February -
Sunday 2nd March 1997**

The Ammerdown Centre,
Radstock near Bath

Cost: £65

Transport available



Rabbi Mark Solomon * Ernest Lazarus * Graham Tyler * Hong Tan

For a booking form or more details please write to:

Michael Rutland,

The Royal Foundation of Saint Katharine,

2 Butcher Row, LONDON E14 8DS

Telephone: 0171 790 3540 Fax: 0171 702 6203

from mid-late 1980s (SPADE)
Lo Dorman Prog
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Lo Gual know people

Please reserve a place for me on 'Positively Spiritual' at The Ammerdown Centre, Bath from 28th February - 2nd March 1997. I enclose a cheque for £65.00 made payable to 'RFSK No 2 Account'

Name: _____ Address: _____

_____ Post Code: _____

Telephone No (inc STD code): _____ / _____

- ☐ I am a vegetarian
- ☐ I have a special diet and enclose details of what I can/cannot eat.
- ☐ I will be travelling from London and would be willing to offer a lift
- ☐ I will be travelling from London, would be grateful of a lift and am happy to share petrol costs
- ☐ I require a wheelchair adapted room.

Please return this to:
'Positively Spiritual', Michael Rutland, RFSK, 2 Butcher Row,
London E14 8DS

A weekend away for people
with HIV / AIDS, their partners and carers



Friday 17th - Sunday 19th March 1995

at The Ammerdown Centre, which is set in the
countryside near Bath. It has hosted several of these
weekends to explore spirituality. They are times of
relaxation, learning, sharing and fun!

led by The Revd Malcolm Johnson,
Rabbi Lionel Blue, Mary Bozena, Canon Peter Larkin,
Rabbi Mark Solomon.

Cost: £60

For an application form phone
071-790 3540

or write to Elizabeth Israel, Ammerdown Bookings,
c/o The Royal Foundation of Saint Katharine,
2 Butcher Row, LONDON, E14 8DS.

Ammerdown Centre, Radstock, Bath

'FUNNY OLD LIFE'

A weekend away

Friday 15th - Sunday 17th March 1996

for people with HIV/AIDS,
their partners and carers.

An opportunity to:

- * Share experiences
- * Explore spirituality
- * Look for meaning
- * Relax and have some fun

Led by:
Rabbi Lionel Blue,
Mary Bozena,
Rabbi Mark Solomon,
Father Philip Lloyd,
Stephen Chamberlain
and Rev Malcolm Johnson,

Cost £65
Information on bursaries available

Details from:
Michael Rutland
The Royal Foundation
of Saint Katharine
2 Butcher Row
LONDON
E14 8DS
0171 790 3540



The Royal Foundation of Saint Katharine

(Founded 1148)

Master: The Revd Malcolm A Johnson MA

2 Butcher Row, London E14 8DS

Tel: 071 790 3540

Fax: 071 702 7603



11th November 1997

Dear Friend

Re: *Positively Spiritual*

Rabbi Lionel Blue and I are delighted to invite you to yet another weekend away at The Ammerdown Centre, Bath from Friday 28th February - Sunday 2nd March 1997.

This is the ninth retreat we have organised and I know you will agree with me that they have been a great success with between 20 and 45 people attending.

If you would like to book now, please use the Booking Form attached and send it marked for the attention of *Michael Rutland at 'Positively Spiritual', The Royal Foundation of Saint Katharine, 2 Butcher Row, London E14 8DS* enclosing a deposit of £65.00. On receipt of this you will be sent an acknowledgment and a letter giving you further details concerning the weekend. I enclose some publicity material for you to circulate amongst your friends.

Thank you for all your support.

Yours sincerely

The Revd Malcolm Johnson