



Ask a Jewish teenager who Captain Ahab, or Huckleberry Finn, or Elizabeth Bennet is. No problem. But Isaiah? Ruth? Rabbi Meir? Forget about it.

WHY WE EXIST

We're "the People of the Book," but we're increasingly illiterate of our own stories.

G-dcast's passionate commitment is to raise basic Jewish literacy using entertaining media that speaks to viewers where they are - not where we wish they were (synagogues, day schools, etc.)

We believe that substantial learning can - and must - happen through online media, and we intend to work with established Jewish institutions to make it happen. We know that our schools, synagogues, JCCs and other agencies will benefit from online education opportunities.

Cracking open core Jewish texts for those who missed out on day school (and those who slept through it) strengthens the foundations that underlie spiritual and intellectual growth. Literacy – not pride, not community, not even our rituals - is what makes us *Klal Yisrael*, the entire Jewish people. We're *animated* about a rich, thoughtful new media contribution to Jewish literacy.

OUR MISSION

G-dcast is a media production company with a nonprofit educational mission: to raise worldwide Jewish literacy, spark great conversations and revolutionize religion by demystifying core Jewish texts with accessible and entertaining media, including animated shorts, feature-length films and games.

OUR VALUES

Pluralism & Diversity – We create content that speaks to Jews wherever they are – geographically and on the observance spectrum – and that reflects the diversity of Jewish thought...and people.

Accessibility – We make work that is engaging, clear and easy to understand, regardless of cultural/educational background or language spoken.

Affordability – Jewish texts belong to us all. We make learning available regardless of ability to pay.

Innovation – We are devoted to a creative, cutting edge approach, in terms of process and product – even though the content itself is timeless. We will never sacrifice quality for experimentation's sake.

OUR PRODUCTS

In 2009 we animated the Torah (the Five Books of Moses) and posted it for free online at www.g-dcast.com as well as on Facebook and YouTube. A DVD will be released in the summer of 2010.

We will complete animation of the entire Tanach (Hebrew Bible) by 2014. We are in the midst of producing a series on the meaning and origins of the major Jewish holidays. Creative teachers' guides that emphasize comprehension and critical thinking accompany every episode that we produce.

Sign up for our mailing list to stay informed about new work as it launches at www.g-dcast.com!

ANIMATING TORAH FOR TODAY
WWW.G-DCAST.COM

The G-dcast team was proud to feature the contributions of an eclectic group of contributors in our adaptation of the Torah into 55 animated shorts. These 55 individuals were selected to represent the diversity of the global Jewish community. They wrote (and sometimes sang) their own *dvar Torahs*, with a little guidance and editing from us. We recorded their words, and animated what we got!

SOME CONTRIBUTOR HIGHLIGHTS

Rabbi David Saperstein, *Parshat Shoftim*



Director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism. Described in a Washington Post profile as the “quintessential religious lobbyist on Capitol Hill” and topping Newsweek’s “Most Influential Rabbis” list, he represents the national Reform Jewish Movement to Congress and the administration.

Rabbi’s Saperstein’s G-dcast has received the most hits of any episode!

Mayim Bialik, *Parshat Vayelech*



Mayim Hoya Bialik is best known for her lead role as Blossom Russo in the early-1990s NBC television sitcom *Blossom*. She currently plays the hit guest starring role of Amy on *Big Bang Theory*. She played the young Bette Midler in *Beaches* and also had guest roles on some of television’s most beloved shows, such as *MacGuyver*, *Webster*, and *The Facts of Life*. She has more recently appeared in HBO’s *Curb Your Enthusiasm* and *Saving Grace*.

Mayim Bialik’s episode contains some fun allusions to her TV character, Blossom!

Rabbi Joseph Telushkin, *Parshat Korach*



Rabbi Joseph Telushkin, a Senior CLAL Associate, was named by Talk Magazine as one of the 50 best speakers in the United States. He the author of *Jewish Literacy: The Most Important Things to Know About the Jewish Religion, Its People and Its History*. The most widely selling book on Judaism of the past two decades, *Jewish Literacy* has been hailed by leading figures in all the major movements of Judaism. His newest book is called *Hillel: If Not Now, When?*

Rabbi Telushkin is a frequent radio guest, and a real ham! We actually had to tell him to tone it down!

Alicia Jo Rabins, *Parshat Vayakhel*



A virtuosic violinist, Alicia began her initiation into klezmer music studying with legendary klezmer fiddler Alicia Svigals. In 2004, she joined the groundbreaking folk-punk group Golem, which reinterprets traditional Gypsy and klezmer tunes with a rock edge. Alicia continues to play and sing her way around the world, including shows with her new project, Girls in Trouble.

Alicia Jo is emblematic of the effort G-dcast makes to highlight the contributions of emerging Jewish voices in the arts and education. Her work deserves mainstream attention and a big part of our mission is bringing it to her and our other contributors.

OUR SUPPORTERS

G-dcast would not be possible without the financial and creative support of the following organizations:



RIGHTEOUS PERSONS FOUNDATION



תגלית • TAGLIT
BIRTHRIGHT ISRAEL
next.birthrightisrael.com
— NEXT —

SAN FRANCISCO FILMSOCIETY.

PRESS CLIPS



'New Jews' stake claim to faith, culture

October 30, 2009

(CNN) – When Moses came down from Mount Sinai about 3,300 years ago, he couldn't have seen these Jews coming.

If they can't easily find what inspires them, some create it themselves.

Sarah Lefton, 36, of San Francisco, California, said she developed [G-dcast](#), weekly cartoon webisodes – narrated by a wide cast of characters, including an indie rocker – to make Jewish learning more engaging. "because God knows we all grew up in boring Sunday school classes."



October 19, 2010

G-DCAST Named One of North America's Most Innovative Jewish Nonprofits

Sixth Annual "Slingshot" Guidebook Names 50 Most Innovative Jewish Nonprofits in America



Forward 50, 2009



Sarah Lefton

As founder and producer of [G-dcast.com](#), an animated online series that tells the story of the Torah, 36-year-old Sarah Lefton is overhauling Jewish literacy. In its inaugural season, the series told the story of the Torah through 55 four-minute episodes, each written and narrated by celebrities and scholars. The free series is designed to expand the Jewish literacy of teenagers and adults who have no formal Jewish education. Lefton burst onto the scene with her "Yo Semite" T-shirts and other sassy, Jewish-flavored fashions from her T-shirt company, the Jewish Fashion Conspiracy. She and her team spent three years scraping together enough money to get the [G-dcast.com](#) site up and running. Now, as the site is reaching people in 95 countries, Lefton plans to stretch her shoestring budget to produce episodes subtitled in Spanish, Russian, and Hebrew, and to create holiday specials — including one just in time for Hanukkah.



Alumni Venture Funds Catching On

September 24, 2009

At the ROI (Return on Investment) conference this summer, philanthropist Lynn Schusterman announced that she had more than quadrupled grants for young Jewish innovators from \$100,000 in 2008 to more than \$400,000 for 2009. These grants are only open to the some-400 members of the ROI community. The ROI Seed Fund, which has a budget of \$180,000, provides grants of up to \$10,000 to support projects in the start-up phase. The Innovation Grants, which provide second-level funding of up to \$50,000, are available to later-stage projects with a preference for those that feature collaboration between members of the ROI community.

The ROI Community grants accomplish two goals: "promoting collaborative partnerships and cross pollination of ideas" and "nurturing and strengthen the ROI network," says Sharon Almougy, ROI grants manager.

Although it's difficult to gauge the impact of the grants on alumni engagement since only one batch of grants have been distributed, Almougy cites the success of G-dcast as indicative of the results ROI hopes to see. Roler Sarah Lefton received a seed grant to develop pilot episodes of G-dcast, a weekly cartoon about the Torah portion. The pilot helped her gain funding to create a full year's worth of weekly cartoon episodes, a significant number of which are narrated by members of the ROI community.

"In our opinion, this is an ideal use of an ROI grant: the development of a pilot that can be used as a basis to further catapult the project, and leveraging the ROI network in taking advantage of talent," Almougy says.



S.F. cartoonist at White House for Jewish heritage shindig

June 3, 2010

Surrounded by so many of her heroes in the East Room of the White House, Sarah Lefton could have become a wallflower. Instead, she knew her presence at the Jewish American Heritage Month reception was a "once in a lifetime opportunity. You just can't be shy."

So she shmoozed like there was no tomorrow.

The San Francisco resident and creator of G-dcast, a weekly online Torah cartoon series, was one of 250 invitees at the event.

Others on the guest list included Jewish members of Congress, Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, athletes, nonprofit innovators such as Lefton, journalists, entertainers and community organizers.

President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama hosted the May 27 event.



Drawn to the Torah: Local innovator reinvents the Saturday morning cartoon

October 31, 2008

G-dcast brings the Torah to life in a wholly original way. The animated series seeks to raise basic Jewish literacy among teens and adults by retelling Torah portions through animated images and diverse voices.

Last week, just in time for Simchat Torah, G-dcast went live with the story of creation as told by Rabbi Lawrence Kushner, scholar-in-residence at Congregation Emanu-El in San Francisco. A new animated short film about the week's Torah portion will be added to the Web site (<http://www.g-dcast.com>) every Monday.

A different person will narrate all 54 Torah portions. So far, Lefton has secured 15 narrators from cities such as San Francisco, New York, London and Melbourne. They are artists, rabbis, musicians and teachers; they are secular, Orthodox and everything in between.

"I was really flattered and honored to be associated with an attempt to make Jewish learning so technologically cutting-edge," Kushner said.



JTA's 100 Most Influential Jewish Twitterers

May 5, 2009

Education: G-dcast ([g_dcast](#)) & MyJewishLearning.com ([jewlearn](#)) -- The cutting edge of Jewish educational content.



The cartoon Torah that's getting teens animated

November 27, 2008

Over the past decade, the internet has been pushing open the gates of Jewish learning to wider audiences. Online ask-the-rabbis field questions from around the world, teachers give shiurum via computer using voice-over technology and if you miss shul on Shabbat, you can still catch the rabbi's sermon the next day on a podcast. But a recently launched venture is taking virtual Torah to a new plane.

Called G-dcast, it consists of a four-minute cartoon based on the weekly Torah portion broadcast on the web. Like a hipper version of Thought for the Day, it is narrated - and in some cases, performed - by different presenters each time.



Rebecca carrying water in G-dcast