

Eight Nights of Jewish Zines: The JOOOT Hanukkah 5781 Zine

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New Voices Magazine has a different kind of light to bring to each night of Hanukkah: Jewish zines. As a long-time collector of zines of many stripes, our Editor is excited to spotlight a series of their favorite independently published zines throughout the holiday. This page will be updated each day of Hanukka with another zine feature, to increase the indie-publishing light alongside the growing glow our

channukiah. For the first night of Hanukkah, kick off the holiday with this interview with the creators of Judaism On Our Own Terms' Hannukah 5781 Zine. You can download and read this digital zine [here \(https://jooot.org/hanukkah-zine/\)](https://jooot.org/hanukkah-zine/)!

Who are you? Who and what is JOOOT?

We are Hannah Gelman (she/her; Brown University '22) and Zmira Stouber (she/her; University of Vermont '20), and we are the Ritual & Resource Chairs on the 2020-21 Judaism on Our Own Terms Steering Committee. We are both passionate about progressive Jewish spaces and creating alternative resources that can help to enhance those communities. JOOOT, or Judaism on Our Own Terms, is a national movement of independent campus Jewish organizations committed to promoting student self-governance and radical inclusivity – both on our individual campuses and in the wider Jewish community. Our goal is to contribute to the long-term sustainability and vibrancy of the North American Jewish community, which we hope will be rich with student-run, democratically administered, inclusive Jewish communities on campuses.

Why make a Hanukkah zine?

While considering upcoming holidays that could potentially benefit from having a comprehensive resource oriented towards the spirit of our network, Hanukkah seemed like the perfect option, given the holiday's themes of resilience and celebration. In addition, because of COVID-19, we have found ourselves and our communities struggling to spiritually engage with our traditions, and with one another. This resource was designed with that difficulty in mind. By compiling rituals, educational materials, meditations, recipes, stories, and songs, we hoped to craft a sense of sacred community while our holidays look vastly different this season.

[\(https://jooot.org/hanukkah-zine/\)](https://jooot.org/hanukkah-zine/)

What was the process behind making this zine? How did you come up with the idea and how did it come to fruition?

We started by identifying specific goals regarding content for the zine, wanting it to be relevant to what we see as JOOOT's values and mission. Next, we collaborated to compile a bank of resources that we could potentially use as sources for the zine, as well as called for artistic contributions for the greater JOOOT network on social media. Over the course of a month, with the help of Zoom and Google Docs, the two of us were able to throw around a bunch of ideas and really have fun with the creative process. This was also our first project together both as JOOOT Steering Committee members as well as Ritual & Resource Chairs. Now that we have some experience, we are super excited to create more fun stuff!



What was challenging about creating this zine?

There are not a lot of Hanukkah resources out there that take a shape similar to the one we wanted to create. While having that

freedom to make whatever we wanted was exciting, it also posed several challenges in terms of determining things like structure from scratch. That being said, there are a lot of resources online that are directed towards more specific aspects of Hanukkah. Deciding precisely which ones we wanted to use was tough, too.

What are your hopes and dreams for this zine, now that it's out in the world?

First and foremost, we hope that people find joy in this zine. We know that Hanukkah can often be a celebratory time of year, but, in 5781, it might be more of a reminder of how much our world has changed. We want this zine to bring light into people's lives in honor of a holiday that does exactly that, and to remind ourselves and whomever encounters the zine that they are a part of a larger movement, no matter where they may be. We also hope that this zine inspires other Jews to create things that they find meaningful, and to share them with those they love.

As a zine maker myself (as Editor of New Voices), I feel that there's an intrinsic connection between the underground press of zines and the often non-hierarchical, DIY feeling of most Jewish ritual. How do you see zines working with your Jewish mission as part of JOOOT?

Zines are very much about breaking conventional boundaries and coloring outside of the lines. We feel as though JOOOT serves a similar purpose for our network members by providing a constantly expanding and shape-shifting template for Jewish expression. As is the case with many of our campus spaces, zines are grown from the ground up and outside of the status quo. Both JOOOT and zine-creating have in common the intention to explore and engage with alternative ways of knowing, making, and being, for the sake of a more diverse culture of thought.

Why do Jewish zines matter to you?

Jewish zines are important because they capture aspects of contemporary Jewish life that many traditional words and resources can't. Their structural and thematic flexibility helps to disseminate information in an interesting and non-hierarchical way. Jewish zines also invite the possibility of increased accessibility to spiritual and educational resources for those who perhaps don't connect easily with more conventional texts. ♦

You can download and read this digital zine [here](https://joooot.org/hanukkah-zine). (<https://joooot.org/hanukkah-zine>). Read more about Jewish zines and find the other Hanukkah Jewish zine features by visiting our holiday landing page [here](#).



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