

## **TheGarden Project**

### **Vision**

Join us in imagining a place.

A place that has never been, but a place that we know can be.

A place precisely for this time, for our time.

Join us in imagining a place where the precious treasures of three thousand years of Jewish life wisdom are gathered and shared.

Here we will present

Neither objects nor history,

Neither art nor artifacts,

But here we will share our most essential ideas, the very values that have made us what we are, the values we have always both embraced and resisted.

The place we ask you to imagine will reach below, beyond and above the things that divide us and plunge straight for the essence of who we are and what unites us—our core, eternal, Jewish values: Chessed, Ahavah, Torah, Shalom, Kedusha, Tzedekah, Tikkun, Mishpat, Tefillah and many others. By focusing on these deep fundamental principles, this place will open a new dialogue of purpose for our people.

These timeless values have traditionally been passed down through the written word. But now, the turns of contemporary history and culture have left these literary treasures of the spirit remote or inaccessible to many.

The place we envision will translate these treasures into a brand new language—one that everyone can comprehend. It is a language of direct physical experience and encounter, one that merges creativity with engagement and uses a powerful new vocabulary of aesthetics, art, graphics, sculpture, architecture, music, film, landscaping and interactive digital media. It is a language that will engage the eye and the ear, the heart and mind, the soul and the imagination.

Judaism views the individual as the culmination of creation. Every person is granted free will to explore, discover and develop a virtually unlimited potential. Our design therefore places each individual visitor at the very center of the entire experience.

The place we imagine will be a luscious, rich garden of unexpected delights, thought provoking challenges, and meaningful experiences imaginatively and artfully designed to encourage visitors to ponder, explore and confront their own precious individual potential.

### **Our Principles**

The essential Jewish ideas and values are relevant for today's Jews and important for contemporary society.

The fragmentation of modern society together with the inapproachability of much of the conventional language of Jewish thought has meant that many people do not have an attractive way to access the riches of our tradition.

Primary Jewish ideas can be translated through new communicative forms—through interactivity, experience, creativity, engagement and aesthetics. Bringing together a number of such experiences in one beautiful location can create a new kind of institution in which all Jews can be engaged and can become a focus for exploring our mutual destiny.

The individual is at the center of the experience and has choices of what to see/do. Each visit is unique.

We strive to be faithful to Judaism, respect the mind and heart of each visitor, and be sensitive, imaginative, and bold in the means of connecting the tradition to every individual.

We view the entire garden as a gateway—a beautiful portal opening out toward further exploration. The goal is simply that the visitor leaves with this thought in mind: This is important to me; I'd like to find out more.

## **Welcome**

We have planted this garden with a profusion of tasty delights. Everywhere you turn you will be presented with opportunities to explore Jewish life and thought in new ways. Your experience today is up to you. Use the next few hours to explore what makes sense to you and what doesn't; what touches you and what doesn't; what interests you and what doesn't. The path you take should not be the path of anyone else. You are here for you.

You are not here to gather information, though we hope your visit will be informative.

You are not here to have fun, though we hope you will have a pleasant visit here.

You are not here to be touched, or moved, though we hope you will have experiences here that are both emotional and spiritual.

You are not here to be entertained, though we have tried to create this place to be attractive and to hold your attention.

You are not here to argue, though we assume there will be things presented that will challenge you and that you will challenge.

You are not here to agree or to disagree, though part of your visit should be your active, personal engagement with our vast tradition.

You are here for you.

You are here to spend a few hours savoring the insights of a unique 3,000 year quest of the human spirit.

You are here to ponder if and how the insights of this quest might be relevant to you, might nourish you.

And you are here to imagine if and how you might choose to contribute to this remarkable quest of the spirit.