

## Against Despair:

### The Jewish Tradition of Choosing Hope in an Age of Rising Antisemitism



## Dr. David Arnow

*Psychologist, acclaimed author,  
and scholar of hope*

### About Dr. David Arnow

David Arnow, Ph.D. is a psychologist and a scholar of the festival of Passover. He graduated from Brandeis University and earned his doctorate at Boston University in 1982.

He is the author of *Creating Lively Passover Seders: A Sourcebook of Tales, Texts & Activities*, co-editor of *My People's Passover Haggadah*, a contributing scholar to *Exodus Conversations ~ How the Story of the Exodus Speaks to Jews, Christians, and Muslims: An Interfaith Commentary and Passover Haggadah*, co-author of *Leadership in the Bible: A Practical Guide for Today* and most recently author of *Choosing Hope: The Heritage of Judaism*.

A writer with decades of leadership experience in the non-profit sector, his many articles on issues of Jewish interest have appeared in *Reform Judaism*, *Conservative Judaism*, *The Journal of Jewish Communal Service*, *Contemporary Judaism*, *Moment Magazine*, *Tikkun*, *The Journal of Israeli History*, *Reform Jewish Quarterly*, *Zeremim*, and numerous Jewish newspapers.

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AJC podcast, [America at 250: Navigating This Moment in Jewish History](#). A panel discussion with Rabbi Angela Buchdahl, Professor Jonathan D. Sarna, and author Dara Horn. June, 1 2026

David's personal website - [davidarnowauthor.com](http://davidarnowauthor.com)

[Exodus and the American Revolution](#). A post on David's Creating Lively Seders website about the influence of the Exodus story, Judaism's master story of hope, on the recommendation for the Great Seal of the United States proposed by Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, and John Adams in 1776.

The [study guide](#) to Choosing Hope: The Heritage of Judaism. Here you can find a lot of material on hope and how it relates to key narratives, practices, and concepts in Judaism.

"[A Letter from God on Tikvah, Hope](#)" written by David and published in These Holy Days: A High Holidays Supplement After October 7

A link to [ReHope: The International Hub for Research at Hebrew University](#). Founded by Professor Oded Adomi Leshem, the Hub conducts cutting edge research on how to strengthen hope and use it as a constructive tool to help Israelis cope with the many challenges they face. David and his wife, Madeleine have been important funders of the Hub since its founding three years ago.

## Key Takeaways

- ☑ In times of trial hope leads us to work with others to overcome the challenges we face. Even small successes strengthen hope and renew our commitment to the work which leads to more success and more hope. So you have a positive feedback loop where hope leads to engagement, and engagement strengthens hope which leads to deeper engagement.
- ☑ The narratives, prayers, and practices of Judaism are powerful sustainers of hope, but finding hope in them often requires looking at them with fresh eyes.
- ☑ Once you've taken hope seriously and discovered sources that sustain it, you need to expand your identity to see yourself as a transmitter of hope to the next generations because our greatest hopes for the world will take a long time to fulfill!

*The views expressed by the speaker don't necessarily reflect Chai Mitzvah's official position.*