In 1898, more than 100 years ago Mark Twain wrote, “All things are mortal except the Jew. All other forces pass, but the Jew remains.” And then he asked, “What is the secret of their immortality?”

Perhaps the most perplexing element of the history of the Jews is that there are still Jews at all. How have we survived such a history of trauma?

Psychologists speak about the fight or flight response, the well documented binary of either fighting back in the face of adversity or running away from it.

Both are predicated on the instinctive human response to survive. In my own experience there is a third response that has been employed by the Jewish people for thousands of years and is one of the answers to the question, “why are there still Jews?”

Adapt

So often throughout history and as is anchored in our rabbinic texts and tradition the Jewish response has been to adapt, to exhibit resilience through flexibility and creativity, setting the preservation of our people, our faith, our tradition above any reflexive response to fight or flee.

I look forward to explore these themes and teaching with you as part of Kolot Mayim’s Series KVELL AT THE WELL Celebrating the Joys of Being Jewish on February 2 at 11am Pacific Time via zoom