

Faculty

Dr. Rabbi Barat Ellman (Jewish Theological Seminary '04, '11) is a scholar of Hebrew Bible, Judaism and Religion. Her research interests include: biblical religion, biblical semantics and ideology, and the social world of the Bible. Her first book, *Memory and Covenant: The Role of Israel's and God's Memory in Sustaining the Deuteronomic and Priestly Covenants* (Fortress, 2013) explores uses of memory in the Pentateuch. Dr. Ellman is also an adjunct professor of Old Testament at Fordham University.



A classically trained vocalist, Rabbi Ellman serves as a High Holiday cantor at Congregation Beth Emeth in Herndon, VA. She lives in Park Slope with her husband, Jay Golan.

Rabbi Dayle Friedman, MSW, MA, BCC, is a chaplain, spiritual director, social innovator and scholar. She has pioneered the development of a Jewish spiritual vision for aging, healing and spiritual care. Her publications include *Jewish Wisdom for Growing Older: Finding Your Grit and Grace Beyond Midlife* (Jewish Lights, 2015), *Jewish Pastoral Care* (Jewish Lights, 2nd edition, 2011), and *Jewish Visions for Aging*. (Jewish Lights, 2008). Rabbi Friedman was the founder and director of Hiddur: The Center for Aging and Judaism of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, and may be contacted at <http://www.growingolder.co>



Rabbi Jeffrey S. Fox currently serves as the Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat Maharat, the first Orthodox institution to ordain women to function as full members of the clergy. Rabbi Fox was the first graduate of the Yeshivat Chovevei Torah Rabbinical School and previously served as the spiritual leader of Kehilat Keshet: The Community Synagogue of Tenafly and Englewood



for nearly seven years. He has taught at the Drisha Institute, Mechon Hadar and the Florence Melton Adult Education Center. He lives in Riverdale with his wife Beth and their four boys.

Dr. Lisa D. Grant is Professor of Jewish Education at Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion. Her research and teaching interests focus on adult Jewish learning, the professional development of Jewish leaders and the place of Israel in American Jewish life. She has published widely on these topics in a range of academic journals, books, and teaching guides. Dr. Grant has been teaching and conducting research about Israel for over two decades, and is a Fellow at the Center for Jewish Peoplehood Education (www.jpeoplehood.org), with a focus on Jewish Peoplehood and Israel education.



Daniel JH Greenwood is professor of law at Hofstra Law School, where he teaches and writes about the demands of justice and democracy in corporate law, torts and public law. His publications have appeared in various law reviews, popular magazines and internationally, and he has co-authored amicus briefs for the US Supreme Court in cases including *Citizens United*.



Previously, he served as the SJ Quinney Professor of Law at the University of Utah's SJ Quinney School of Law. Professor Greenwood is a graduate of St. Ann's, Harvard College and Yale Law School and studied political science and Judaica at the Hebrew University and the Shalom Hartman Institute.

Rabbi Reuven Greenvald is Director of Strategic Outreach, North America at the Jewish Agency for Israel where he gets to think about new approaches to Jewish life and the place of Israel within it. He was ordained as a rabbi by the Jewish Theological Seminary, and then worked for over twenty years as a day school leader in the DC and



San Francisco Bay areas. His volunteer and leisure activities include the Brooklyn Israel Film Festival, singing in the Community Chorus of Congregation Beit Simchat Torah, vegan cooking, and running.

Dr. David Kraemer is Joseph J. and Dora Abbell Librarian (=Director of The Library) at The Jewish Theological Seminary, where he has also served as Professor of Talmud and Rabbinics. As Librarian, Prof. Kraemer is at the helm of the most extensive collection of Judaica, rare and contemporary, in the Western hemisphere.



On account of the size and importance of the collection, Prof. Kraemer is instrumental in setting policy and establishing vision for projects of international importance.

Prof. Kraemer is a prolific author and has lectured around the country. His books include *The Mind of the Talmud* (1990), *Responses to Suffering in Classical Rabbinic Literature* (1995), *The Meanings of Death in Rabbinic Judaism* (2000), *Jewish Eating and Identity Through the Ages* (Routledge, 2007), and the forthcoming *Rabbinic Judaism: Space and Place*.

Joey Weisenberg is the Creative Director of the Hadar Center for Communal Jewish Music, and the author of *Building Singing Communities*. He worked for seven years as the Music Director at Kane Street Synagogue, and compiled the *Kane Street Songster*. He's a multi-instrumentalist musician, singer, *ba'al tefilah* (prayer leader), and composer who has performed and recorded internationally in a wide variety of musical styles. Joey works to empower communities around the world to unlock their musical and spiritual potential. For more information, please visit www.joeyweisenberg.com.



Beit Midrash is a term given to the House of Text Study in the traditional Jewish community. Its atmosphere is fundamentally different than the secular educational schools with which we are generally more familiar. In universities, for example, classes are quiet and ordered, and in libraries the most focused study occurs in separate, private carrels. The Beit Midrash atmosphere, in contrast, is energetic, even boisterous. Students often sit around tables, and the physical proximity encourages them to listen, share, argue and imagine together.

What explains the passion and intensity of the Beit Midrash?

Jewish text study comes primarily not from intellectual interest, but from a love affair. From Sinai, 3300 years ago, Jews have been drawn to the study of the Torah and other sacred writings because these addressed their most important questions about life. Just as we learn about ourselves in our intimate, loving personal relationships, so study of texts helps us to discover who we want to become. As in all relationships of love, the connection to the texts is marked by reflection, unpredictability, struggle and joy.

Our Beit Midrash theme for this year is "Jewish texts and the personal life". By studying together Jewish literature, from the Bible to Modern Hebrew Poetry, we will explore life challenges, including sibling rivalry, aging, Jewish identity, dealing with suffering, and Jewish prescriptions for "the good life".

Open Beit Midrash is for learners of all levels. We value diversity. Come whether you have studied Jewish texts for twenty years or are a complete novice. All texts are studied in English translation.

Open Beit Midrash is held almost every Tuesday evening, from October 20, 2015 to April 12, 2016. We begin with a catered dinner at 6:45 and the class is from 7:30-9:00 P.M.

While the program is drop-in and you may attend as much or as little as you like, please consider the full 24 week program, in order to appreciate the journey and growth of Jewish wisdom from Sinai to the 21st Century. As detailed below, we offer a subscription option which enables you to attend all of the sessions for the year.



Sol and Lillian Goldman Educational Center
Kane Street Synagogue
236 Kane Street
(between Court and Clinton)
Cobble Hill, Brooklyn

www.kanestreet.org
718 875 1550
Fax 718 797 1152

The 2015-2016
Open Beit Midrash
at Kane Street Synagogue
Sol and Lillian Goldman
Educational Center

Explore Classical Jewish Texts with expert teachers, through modern lens

LEARNING AND TRANSFORMATION





Open Beit Midrash

Rabbi Samuel Weintraub, Dean

Tuesday Evenings

October 20, 2015 to April 12, 2016

6:45 P.M. Dinner
7:30–9:00 P.M. Class

Cost: \$40 per three week course (includes catered dinner), or you may purchase a subscription for \$180 for the year (all eight courses, including all dinners). See inside.

236 Kane Street
(between Court and Clinton) Cobble Hill, Brooklyn



Purchase a Beit Midrash Subscription for the Year. As many courses and catered dinners as you like for 24 evenings, \$180 per person.

Scholarships available.

Contact Rabbi Weintraub at rabbi@kanestreet.org

I/we would like to purchase a year subscription(s):

NAME(S): _____

EMAIL: _____

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Enclose please find a check payable to **Kane Street Synagogue** (note: Open Beit Midrash)

or

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NUMBER: _____

EXP. DATE: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

Fax this form to 718-797-1152
or mail to
Kane Street Synagogue,
236 Kane Street, Brooklyn, NY 11231

VOLUNTEER

We invite you to join us in building a more knowledgeable and caring community. If you'd like to volunteer in one of the Beit Midrash committees, contact Joy Fallek at ronitjoy@aol.com

QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions about the Beit Midrash, or would like to suggest a course, contact Joy Fallek at ronitjoy@aol.com

THE TORAH OF MUSIC

Joey Weisenberg

October 20, 27 and November 3, 2015

Where there is song there is prayer.

(Brachot 6a) תפלה תהא שם רנה במקום

Musician and teacher Joey Weisenberg will teach how to explore the soul of a melody - and how melody explores the soul. Students will experience music together by singing new nigunim, and then discuss the spiritual teachings of the music by studying musical-spiritual texts and stories from the Jewish tradition. Selections will be drawn from the Bible, Talmud, Medieval Commentaries, Kabbalistic Treatises, Halakhic works, as well as Chasidic writings. Using ideas from his book *Building Singing Communities*, Joey will also discuss strategies for bringing people together to make music a lasting and joy-filled force in Synagogue and Jewish life. Open to anyone, regardless of musical or Jewish knowledge or singing ability. All texts will be provided in English as well as in the original Hebrew or Aramaic.

ARGUING WITH GOD: JUSTICE IN AN UNJUST WORLD

Professor Dan Greenwood

November 10, 17 and 24, 2015

At least since Abraham at Sodom, Jews have complained that the God of Justice often seems to misunderstand the requirements of justice.

Approaches to this "theodicy" problem vary. The author of Job argues that God's power is so great that justice doesn't apply, or perhaps that our comprehension is so thin that we can't see the sense in which the apparently unjust actually isn't. Others contend that the injustice of the world demonstrates that God is not all-powerful or doesn't even exist.

But the most distinctively Jewish response is to insist that only a just God is worthy of worship, and a just God has no choice but to respond to the demands of justice. As Michael Strassfeld teaches, if Abraham had insisted that not even one innocent person be punished, Messiah would have had to come that day.

In this course, we will explore a random selection of texts from a variety of periods in which Jews bear witness or even bring lawsuits against God or otherwise struggle with the implications of a creation in which "the wise dies like the fool ... all is mere wind." (Solomon/Kohelet). Our texts are more likely to be stories than explicit arguments; we will seek to complicate our own views with and against them.

MIDRASH- THE ART OF RE-IMAGINATION

Rabbi Reuven Greenvald

December 1, 8, and 15, 2015

Midrash, rabbinic interpretation of Tanakh, is more than mere commentary. Through the midrashic process, the Talmudic sages do not see the text and their world as they are; rather they envision and reimagine text and world as they could be. We will delve into midrash as seen from this perspective and use it as springboard to think about effecting change in our contemporary contexts by applying models of innovative thinking.

We will study selections from the classic Rabbinic midrash on the book of Exodus, Mekhilta d'Rabbi Yishmael - a bold, and understudied, source of this type of re-imagination. Community will be the overarching theme and it will be considered from three perspectives: becoming a community of multiple voices, becoming a learning community, and becoming a covenantal community.

"UNPACKING THE CONVERSION DEBATE - ANCIENT SOURCES, MODERN QUESTIONS"

Rabbi Jeffrey Fox

January 5, 12 and 19, 2016

The contemporary discourse around the process of conversion is built on a series of ancient debates. This course will seek to unpack two of the most complex issues in the modern conversion crisis - what are the requirements and status of the adjudicating court; and what level of observance is required for the potential convert? Issues of conversion force us to define the boundaries of our community and what we mean when we say "Jewish." Students will learn material from the Rabbinic, Medieval and Early Modern periods in order to learn to appreciate what often seems like intolerant debate.

"SAY YOU ARE MY SISTER...":

SISTERS AND BROTHERS IN THE BIBLE

Dr. Rabbi Barat Ellman

January 26, February 2 and 9, 2016

Among the many familial relationships represented in the Bible, one stands out for its obscurity: the relationship between sisters and brothers. There are stories about brothers, stories about sisters, stories of husbands and wives, mothers and sons, and of fathers and sons. Many of these relationships are exploited for their metaphorical potential in the literature of the prophets, for instance Hosea's symbolic marriage and Ezekiel's parable of sisters Sodom, Samaria and Jerusalem. But the sister-brother relationship - a recurring element in Egyptian, Mesopotamian and Canaanite mythology - goes almost unremarked upon in the Bible.

How did brothers and sisters relate to each other in ancient Israel? What was distinctive about the relationship and why was the connection between brothers and sisters of such minor interest to the authors of the Bible? In this class we will explore the representation of brother-sister relationships in the Torah, Prophets and Scriptures, namely Rebekah and Leban; Dina and the sons of Jacob; Miriam and her two brothers; Michal and Jonathan; Tamar and Ammon, and the Shulamite of Song of Songs, to see what can be gleaned from them about this particular sibling bond.

GROWING OLDER, GROWING DEEPER & WISER

Rabbi Dayle Friedman

February 16, 23 and March 1, 2016

If we are lucky, the path beyond midlife will be long, rich and complex. The nature of life after 60 is unprecedented. Only with today's longevity do we face the possibility of decades of vitality and productivity, but also years of protracted frailty. How are we to navigate this uncharted terrain?

This course will explore how we can grow deeper and wiser as we grow older. With a combination of text study, engaging exercises and Jewish spiritual practices, we will examine key challenges of aging and hone our resiliency and wisdom. Session topics will be:

Looking back, changing forward: life story midrash. Just as midrash (imaginative exegesis) helps us to plumb the depths of the sacred texts of our traditions, midrashic inquiry can help us to find meaning and new perspective in stories from our lives.

Mortality and fragility. Facing the finitude of our existence gives urgency to the life ahead. We will transgress our culture's taboos and examine what we might learn if we open ourselves to the challenges of mortality and frailty.

What are you doing with the rest of your life? Mission, meaning and legacy. We will investigate Abraham and Moses as elder leaders. Why does the Torah choose as its central figures individuals who are beyond midlife? What is the special dimension that they bring to their missions? We will explore the nature of "encore" callings, what social entrepreneur Marc Freedman calls "living a legacy," and work on discerning what calls us as we look ahead.

BIBLICAL AND RABBINIC TEACHINGS ABOUT "THE GOOD LIFE"

Prof. David Kraemer

March 8, 15 and 22, 2016

What is the life "well-lived?" This is a question that all human cultures and traditions—including Judaism—have asked. Thinking about Judaism's answer to this question, we might imagine that it includes, more than anything else, observance of mitzvot and study of Torah. But what about joy and satisfaction? Does Judaism care about these at all, and, if so, how does it suggest that we achieve them? In these sessions, we will explore both biblical and rabbinic teachings that might help us answer these questions.

ISRAEL: ONE LAND, MANY NARRATIVES

Prof. Lisa Grant

March 29, April 5 and 12, 2016

Creating a national Israeli culture has been an ongoing part of the project of State-building since the early days of the modern Zionist movement. We will explore how popular culture serves as a way into engaging issues of identity and meaning. We will use music, art and poetry as lenses into three major themes that are in dynamic tension in contemporary Israeli society: 1) Israel and Diaspora; 2) The Hero and Every person and 3) Power and Responsibility.