

SESSION II SUMMER PROGRAM

July 23- Aug 3

8:45am-11:15am

Introductory level

The Music of Mishna - David Debow

Over the course of our two weeks together, we will explore both the media and the message of Mishna. This ancient text compiled by Rebbe Yehuda HaNasi in the beginning of the third century represents the backbone of the entire corpus of the Oral Law. We will sample Mishnayot from each of the different Orders touching on the full range of the Oral Law, from agriculture to liturgy and ritual, from marriage to tortes, from the intuitive economic laws to the strange world of purity and sacrifices. Our goal will be two-fold, we aim to understand the meaning each Mishna conveys and to gain an appreciation for the method it uses to convey those meanings. In addition, we will probe the personalities of the various Sages and gain an appreciation for the enduring significance of the perennial debates that defined their world. We will be working with the Hebrew text of the Mishna with translations available. Hebrew facility is certainly useful but not required.

Intermediate Level

Darkhei Shalom - Ways of Peace: Talmud Tractate Gittin - Rahel Berkovits

This class is designed to give you your first taste of Talmud! The course will focus on basic skills— understanding the structure of the Talmudic page and passage, and how to follow its complex arguments. Students will also encounter the literary power of the Talmud and will have the opportunity to examine and discuss a number of existential and halakhic questions that preoccupied the Sages and yet are still relevant to today. Such as: How important is it to compromise the letter of the law for the sake of peace among people? Whom do the Rabbis consider to be part of an average Jew's community? Which areas in life do the Rabbis feel cause the most fighting and unrest in communities? (Don't be surprised when the Synagogue tops the list!) How was the Torah given? In-depth attention will be paid- through critical analysis of language and structure- to the overarching meta-halakhic concepts and theological and philosophical messages the Sages are trying to convey in their discussion

Advanced Level

Just Right: Balancing Concerns of Justice in the Beit Din - Matthew Nitzanim

In our Talmud class, we'll be studying the fourth chapter of Masechet Sanhedrin, "Echad Dinei Mamonot." The stated aim of the chapter is to delineate and explain the procedural differences between civil and capital cases in Beit Din (a Jewish court of law). Beneath the surface, we'll see how the Talmud engages in careful reading and creative thinking in order to formulate the principles of jurisprudence that underlie the norms of court proceedings, the bedrock of a just society.

11:45am-1:15pm (Sun, Mon, Tues, Thurs)

Rabbinic Midrash: More than Abraham Smashing His Father's Idols

- Rachel Friedrichs

Have you ever learned a rabbinic midrash and wondered, "What are the rabbis talking about?" or asked yourself, "Where did the rabbis get this stuff from?!". This canon of rabbinic writings spans over 1,000 years and is the foundation for all Jewish biblical interpretation that followed, and yet it is often obscure, fanciful or enigmatic. This course will explore the what, why and how of midrashic literature. Emerge with greater understanding of how midrash functions and get equipped with skills that will make you a more confident reader of these powerful texts.

The Problem of Evil: A Conversation between Jewish Sources and Contemporary Philosophy

- Michael Harris

If God is - as Jewish tradition and some other major world faiths maintain - all-powerful, all-knowing and morally perfect, how can it be that evil and suffering exist in our world to the extent and in the depth and variety that they do? This course looks at a range of approaches that have been taken in addressing this age-old and most challenging question, focusing in particular on connections between relevant Jewish sources and contemporary discussions in analytic philosophy of religion. No previous background in Hebrew or philosophy is required.

Walking With Your Inner Spirit: Six Opportunities, Practices and Encounters to Experience the Divine Within - Yiscah Smith

Exploring six spiritual practices that cultivate an encounter with the Divine Presence within. The course draws on excerpts from Rabbi Kalonymus Kalman Shapira's, the Piaseczner Rebbe's, *Bnei Machshava Tova*. These practices enhance the experience of prayer and contemplation with the focus on the art of self-observation. The main objective of these practices is to develop an expanded Godly consciousness, what the Piaseczner refers to as "*machshava tova*," sensing the Divine in an immanent, visceral and authentic way.

2:30pm-5:00pm (Sun, Mon, Wed, Thurs)

Introductory Level

What's Love got to do with it? Exploring the Concept of Divine Love in the Bible - Rachel Margolin

At the center of one of our most fundamental mantras, the Shema, is the commandment to Love G-d. But what does this Biblical commandment actually mean? And how can Judaism, a religion based almost entirely in action, demand people to emotionally commit to G-d?

In this class we will explore what "biblical love" means by analyzing its appearance in interpersonal, human relationships, its use in Shir Hashirim as a metaphor, and ultimately in our relationship to the divine.

Intermediate Level

The Tanakh interprets Itself: How Parallel passages Explain Literary Puzzles - Shmuel Klitsner

We will explore six puzzling biblical passages through the literary technique of intertextual reading. Parallel and sometimes inversely parallel language and theme will unlock the exquisite and complex meanings embedded within the artful discourse of Biblical writing.

Advanced Level

Why is the Simple Meaning of the Bible not so Simple? - Martin Lockshin

Surprisingly, the oldest Jewish Bible commentaries that we have are midrashic. They are far from the "plain" meaning (the *peshat*) of the text. In the Middle Ages, a few Bible commentators strove to get "back" to the plain meaning. In this course we will study the efforts of three of them: Rashi, Rashbam, and Abraham ibn Ezra.

PARDES SUMMER PROGRAM



Session I – July 3–20, 2023

Session II – July 23–August 3, 2023

Teacher Biographies



David Debow: David Debow is the founding director of Midreshet Emunah v'Omanut, a unique Seminary in Jerusalem specializing in Torah education and the Arts. He and his family spent time in Cleveland at the Mizrahi School, while he served in various capacities including High School Principal. He holds an MA in Educational Administration from Ursuline College and a BA in Physics from Yeshiva University. He learned at Yeshivat Har Etzion and served in the IDF. He currently resides in Alon Shevut with his wife, a noted author Dr. Yocheved Debow and their lovely family.



Rahel Berkovits: Rahel Berkovits is a senior faculty member at the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem, where she has been teaching Mishnah, Talmud and *halakha* for over twenty years. Rahel lectures widely in both Israel and abroad especially on topics concerning women and Jewish law and a Jewish sexual ethic. She is the Halakhic Editor and a writer for *Hilkhot Nashim* the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance's Halakhic Source-guide Series, recently published by Koren Publishing. Rahel is a founding member of Congregation *Shirah Hadasha*, a halakhic partnership Synagogue, and serves on their *halakha* committee. In June 2015, Rahel received Rabbinic Ordination from Rabbis Herzl Hefter and Daniel Sperber.



Matthew Nitzanim: Matthew Nitzanim (he/him) is studying for Semicha (rabbinic ordination) at Yeshivat Machanayim (OTS). Raised in Silver Spring, MD, and a graduate of Princeton University, Matthew is currently pursuing a masters in bioethics at Bar-Ilan University. He teaches Talmud and Contemporary Jewish Thought at Yeshivat Eretz Hatzvi. Matthew lives in Jerusalem with his spouse and child.



Rachel Friedrichs: Rachel (PCJE '07) has taught Talmud at Gann Academy in Boston, Tanakh at Yeshivat Hadar in New York, English in Gujarat, India through the American Jewish World Service Volunteer Corps, and at various gap-year programs based in Jerusalem. She is originally from New Rochelle, NY and currently lives in Modi'in with her family.



Yiscah Smith: Yiscah teaches Jewish contemplative practice and spiritual texts at the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies and at Applied Jewish Spirituality. She has also founded and directs Conscious Community Nachlaot, an organization in Jerusalem that hosts Shabbat in-person spiritual gatherings, virtual guided meditation sittings and spiritual text classes. In addition, Yiscah works with individuals in her private spiritual mentoring practice. Yiscah has earned a reputation as a sought-after inspiring international public speaker.



Michael Harris: Rabbi Dr Michael Harris was born in London in 1964. He studied at three yeshivot in Israel: Ma'ale Adumim, Machon Harry Fischel and Yeshivat HaMivtar in Efrat. He holds semicha (rabbinic ordination) from the Chief Rabbinate of Israel and from other prominent Israeli rabbis. Rabbi Harris is also the author of *Faith without Fear: Unresolved Issues in Modern Orthodoxy* (Valentine Mitchell, 2016) and co-author, with Professor Daniel Rynhold, of *Nietzsche, Soloveitchik and Contemporary Jewish Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, 2018).



Rachel Margolin: Rachel Margolin is currently an administrative coordinator and pedagogy mentor for the Pardes Center for Jewish Educators. Rachel was born and raised in New York. Previously, she attended Stern College as a fellow in the Legacy Heritage Fellowship for Jewish Educators and received her MA at the Bernard Revel Graduate school In Bible. Prior to making Aliyah in August 2020, she worked at SAR High School where she wore many hats including teaching Tanakh and Gemara, as well as working on the Israel guidance and student activities teams. She co-founded and managed The Musket Club, a kosher supper club, which was featured in the Jewish Week, The Forward, and Fleishig Magazine.



Shmuel Klitzner: Shmuel Klitzner has taught Bible and Talmud for many years at Jerusalem's Midreshet Lindenbaum. He is the chairman of Midreshet Lindenbaum's groundbreaking Women's Institute of Halakhic Leadership. Klitzner was involved in the award winning Hanukah animation Lights, and served as Rabbi of Emunah's School for Torah and Arts. Klitzner is the author of *Wrestling Jacob: Deception, Identity, and Freudian Slips in Genesis* and coauthor of the educational novel, *The Lost Children of Tarshish*.



Martin Lockshin: Martin Lockshin taught Jewish Studies for 38 years at York University in Toronto where he has the title of University Professor Emeritus. He is the author of six books and dozens of articles on the Bible and Bible commentaries. He retired and moved to Israel and has taught since at Pardes and other Israeli institutions.