

Summer Session 1. July 12-22, 2021

Full Course Descriptions Below

| | Course # 1 Talmud | Course #2 Bible and Jewish Thought | Course #3 Halakha, Midrash, Prayer |
|--|--|---|--|
| | 4:30-6:30pm IDT 9:30-11:30am EDT (8 classes. Mon-Thurs) | 7:00-8:45pm IDT 12:00-1:45pm EDT (8 classes. Mon-Thurs) | 9:10-10:00pm IDT 2:10-3:00pm EDT (6 classes. Mon, Tue, Thurs) |
| | <i>Making Meaning of Mishna Relationship with the Divine or Community? (Mishna)</i> Rahel Berkovits | <i>Mahloket Matters: The Value of Constructive Disagreement</i> Michael Emerson | <i>The Flame of Love: Rabbinic Tales of Light and Marriage</i> Gila Fine |
| | <i>Accountability and Liability-Talmudic Definitions of Social Responsibility (Intro. Talmud)</i> Leah Rosenthal | <i>Leadership in Troubled Times. The Book of Judges</i> Mike Feuer | <i>Uncovered: Women and Dress Code Laws</i> Nechama Goldman Barash |
| | <i>Which Texts are Holy? -The 16th Chapter of Tractate Shabbat (Intermediate Talmud)</i> Zvi Hirschfield | <i>Underdogs in the Bible (Intermediate-Adv)</i> Howard Markose | <i>Favorite Psalms from the Prayer Book (Intermediate)</i> Alex Israel |
| Essential Judaism for Jewish Educators Track, open to all | <i>The Hebrew Bible. Unlocking its Power, Meaning and Content</i> Mike Uram | <i>Major Debates in Jewish Thought</i> Zvi Hirschfield | <i>"Where are They?" A Practical guide to the Prayerbook</i> Michal Kohane |

[Essential Judaism for Educators](#) is a summer professional development program providing educators with a grounding in Jewish text, customs and rituals. Through the program of study and mentorship, participants will emerge feeling equipped to more skillfully incorporate Jewish texts and themes into their teaching.

Summer program students are eligible to take any of these courses, with an awareness that the classes are oriented to knowledge and Jewish practice rather than textual skill-building, and there may be some discussion of educational aspects of the topics studied. Participants of the "Essential Judaism" track will take ONLY these courses.

Session One Course Descriptions

Course #1 Mishna and Talmud 4.30pm Israel, 9.30am EDT

Relationship with the Divine or Community? A Textual Study of the Second and Third Chapters of Tractate *Berakhot*

MISHNA INTRODUCTORY

[Rabbi Rahel Berkovits](#)

This class is an introduction to the *Mishna*, the basis and bedrock of the Oral law. How is the text structured and ordered? Why is it so important in the creation of the Talmud and for the continuation of Rabbinic Judaism till the modern day? How did Rabbinic Judaism create, sustain and remodel a relationship with the Divine in the era post Temple destruction? Can one live in *Malhut Shamiim*, the Kingdom of Heaven, and engage in one's surrounding community at the same time? What is the interplay between law and the individual's personal situation and needs? Do the Rabbis think women are liminal members of the community and on the outside, or do women reside amongst the community of God? In this course we will study and analyze the literary structure and thematic messages presented in the Mishnah to answer these questions and more.

Accountability and Liability- Talmudic Definitions of Social Responsibility

TALMUD INTRODUCTORY

[Leah Rosenthal](#)

In this series we will read, analyze and discuss a selection of Talmudic passages from tractate *Bava Kamma*. These discussions will allow us a glimpse into the Talmud's thinking about legal and moral questions of interpersonal responsibility and liability. As we follow the Talmudic argumentation and rhetoric, we will encounter the twists and turns of Talmudic discourse, deepen our understanding and appreciation of classic Rabbinic thinking, and come across some surprising interpretations and positions along the way.

Which Texts are Holy? -The 16th Chapter of Tractate Shabbat

TALMUD INTERMEDIATE

[Rabbi Zvi Hirschfield](#)

Together we will learn the opening sugyot of the 16th chapter of tractate Shabbat which discusses the status of various texts and whether one may violate shabbat in order to rescue them from a fire. In addition to the the Talmudic text we will learn central medieval commentaries to expand our appreciation of the themes raised in the chapter and how they developed into Halakhic norms.

Essential Judaism for Jewish Educators Course

Unlocking the Power, Meaning and Content of the Hebrew Bible

[Rabbi Mike Uram](#)

What exactly does the Hebrew Bible (*Tanakh*) include? What is its structure? How does one navigate it? How can one read its texts in ways that make them more accessible, more compelling, and relevant?

This course is designed to help students gain introductory skills, knowledge, interpretive tools, and inspiration to make the Hebrew Bible come to life. We will spend time understanding the history and structure of the text, and we will explore essential narrative, personalities and laws to deepen and contextualize students' knowledge.

Course #2 Bible and Jewish Thought 7pm Israel, 12pm EDT

Mahloket Matters: The Value of Constructive Disagreement

[Rabbi Michael Emerson](#)

ALL LEVELS

We often think of disagreements as an unfortunate aspect of life. Yet, in the tradition of the Mishnah and Talmud, mahkloket (debate) is a vital tool to generate discussion and critical thinking. It serves to inject different perspectives into the conversation in order to fully thrash out the relevant issues.

In this course, we will explore how the debates and tensions in the Bible, Talmud, and commentaries are directly relevant to some of the most explosive contemporary political, religious, and ideological conflicts. We will also utilize the tools of social psychology to help distinguish between different types of disagreements and explore why good people may have diametrically opposing views on moral issues. In an age when civil discourse is on the decline and demonization of the other has become common practice, it is crucially important that we find the courage to productively engage with people with whom we disagree.

Leadership in Troubled Times. The Book of Judges

[Rabbi Mike Feuer](#)

ALL LEVELS

The period between entering the land and the rise of the kingship was a time of struggle without and within for the Children of Israel, and it demanded a certain type of leadership - the Judges. This class will examine the leadership model which the Judges represent over all, and will delve into a selection of stories in an attempt to understand what qualities made them successful and which caused their failures. Along the way we will gather insights into ourselves as leaders and consider the implications of these stories for our day.

Underdogs in the Bible: Snatching Victory from the Jaws of Defeat

[Rabbi Dr. Howard Markose](#)

INTERMEDIATE-ADVANCED (*strong Hebrew recommended*)

This course is designed to take a close look at Biblical characters who seemed to have emerged unscathed (perhaps?) in spite of circumstances not looking good for them.

We will study episodes of our Tanakh which include the characters Joseph, Leah, Tamar, Esther, and Job.

Each of these personalities became an 'underdog' of a sort when they faced a devastating incident which needed to be addressed either by them directly, or by some outside influence. We will examine the texts that recount the challenges as well as the 'rescues' that followed. Would we have moved the stories in that same way, or would we have wanted to suggest alternative outcomes to the episodes?

Essential Judaism for Jewish Educators Course***Major Debates in Jewish Thought. The Kuzari and the Rambam***

[Rabbi Zvi Hirschfield](#)

INTRO LEVEL

This course will provide a primer to major themes in Jewish Thought : The approach to Jewish Peoplehood, the role of Mitzvot, the source of Jewish Faith, the Land of Israel, prophecy, and other central ideas. These will be discussed through the range of Jewish literature from the Bible to the Modern day.

Course #3 Halakha, Midrash and Prayer 9:10 Israel, 2:10 EDT***The Flame of Love: Rabbinic Tales of Light and Marriage***

[Gila Fine](#)

ALL LEVELS

Why does a bride spend her wedding night holding a candle? What happens when a wife returns home after the light has gone out? And how does a newlywed come to break two lamps on a rabbi's head? Exploring the role of light in three marriage stories from the Talmud and Midrash.

Uncovered: Women and Dress Code Laws[Rabbanit Nechama Goldman Barash](#)

ALL LEVELS

The Talmud brings various examples of *ervah* or nakedness that must be covered up when men are praying or learning Torah. In a modern, progressive society, is it legitimate for religious communities to demand dress codes of its members and why is the dress code for women almost always more restrictive than that for men?

In this six part series, we will look at rabbinic and halakhic sources having to do with modesty, women's hair covering, singing and their overall physical presence in religious society. Using primary and secondary sources, we will uncover some of the interesting nuances and developments that have taken place in halakhic discourse over the last 2000 years and try to answer why religious dress codes remain a significant part of religious identity.

Psalms (Tehillim) of the Prayer Book[Rabbi Alex Israel](#)

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL (Hebrew familiarity recommended)

We will study some of the most famous Psalms from the siddur, including Ashrei (145), Tachanun (6), Hashem Malakh (93), and others that we will decide together. We will learn about the style of Psalms and the way that they are structured. This course will provide a portal to an appreciation of what was probably the earliest prayer-book.

Essential Judaism for Jewish Educators Course***"Where are They?" The How and Why of the Prayerbook***[Rabbanit Michal Kohane](#)

This class will offer a primer to the prayer book. What are the three daily prayers and where do they come from? What does a standard prayer consist of? What is Shema? What is the Amida? When do we stand, sit and bow? This class will explain the how, the why, and give you more confidence in prayer, alone or in communal settings.

Summer Session 2: July 26 – August 5, 2021

Full Course Descriptions Below

| | Course # 1 Mishna and Talmud | Course #2 Bible/Tanakh | Course #3 Jewish Thought and Practice |
|--|--|--|---|
| | 4:30-6:30pm IDT 9:30-11:30am EDT (8 classes. Mon-Thurs) | 7:00-8:45pm IDT 12:00-1:45pm EDT (8 classes. Mon-Thurs) | 9:10-10:00pm IDT 2:10-3:00pm EDT (6 classes. Mon, Tue, Thurs) |
| | <i>Welcome to the World of Mishnah</i> Nechama Goldman Barash | <i>What really happened in Eden?</i> Mike Feuer | <i>The Journey Towards Actualizing Our Best Selves - The book of Tanya</i> Zvi Hirschfield |
| | <i>"Next Year in (Rebuilt) Jerusalem"</i> (Tractate Rosh Hashanna) Michael Hattin | <i>"Where you lead, I will follow"</i> Biblical Texts consider Responsible Citizenship and "Followership" Rachel Margolin | <i>Going Down to Rise Up: Jewish Wisdom of Harnessing Darkness to Move Towards the Light</i> Mira Niculescu |
| | <i>Which Texts are Holy? -The 16th Chapter of Tractate Shabbat</i> (continued from first session. New students welcome to join.) Zvi Hirschfield | <i>More Underdogs in the Bible: Snatching Victory from the Jaws of Defeat</i> (Intermediate-Adv) Howard Markose | |
| Essential Judaism for Jewish Educators Track, open to all | <i>Day to Day Jewish Life - Creating Sparks</i> Reuven Margrett | <i>What's in a Year? Around the Jewish Calendar in Eight Days</i> Aviva Lauer | <i>Shabbat – A SpiRitual Experience. An Introduction to Shabbat Rituals and Practices</i> Howard Markose |

[Essential Judaism for Educators](#) is a summer professional development program providing educators with a grounding in Jewish text, customs and rituals. Through the program of study and mentorship, participants will emerge feeling equipped to more skillfully incorporate Jewish texts and themes into their teaching.

Summer program students are eligible to take Any of these courses, with an awareness that the classes are oriented to knowledge and Jewish practice rather than textual skill-building, and there may be some discussion of educational aspects of the topics studied. Participants of the "Essential Judaism" track will take ONLY these Courses.

Session 2 Course Descriptions

Course #1 Mishnah and Talmud 4.30pm Israel, 9.30am EDT

Welcome to the World of Mishna

MISHNA INTRODUCTORY LEVEL

[Rabbanit Nechama Goldman Barash](#)

The Mishna, published at the end of the 2nd century CE, is an edited record of the complex body of material known as the Oral Torah. It is divided topically into six orders and then further divided into 63 tractates, then into chapters and finally into 4192 individual mishnayot. Subsequent rabbinic discourse is built onto this magnificent structure of Oral Law and serves as the foundation for the Talmud. One of the things that is most noticeable about Mishna is the lack of uniformity. Almost every mishna contains a dispute between different rabbinic sages which reveals both the intensity of the discourse and the willingness to entertain dissent.

In this class, we will study mishnayot from a number of tractates that will reflect the wide range of topics that appear in the mishna from the definition of prayer to the definition of marriage to various laws of Shabbat and what a kosher shofar looks like. Students will be able to study the text in its original with simultaneous translation and guided questions to help deepen some of the bigger questions about preserving tradition, defining religious identity and practice and the role text study plays in the ongoing process.

"Next Year in (Rebuilt) Jerusalem" (Tractate Rosh Hashanah)

TALMUD INTRODUCTORY LEVEL

[Rabbi Michael Hattin](#)

The destruction of the 2nd Temple in 70 CE, after a long siege by the Romans, spelled catastrophe for the Jewish people. With the land of Israel in ruins, self-rule crushed and many driven into exile, the future seemed bleak. Would the Jewish people survive?

Wasting no time, a visionary leader by the name of Yochanan ben Zakai set about to remake Judaism for the post-Temple era. We will consider some of his creative and controversial innovations, especially concerning beloved holiday rituals, understood against the backdrop of his unusual biography. Over the course of our 8 sessions, we will appreciate how Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai radically reshaped our tradition, preparing it for the next two millennia of its development, until the present day.

Which Texts are Holy? The 16th Chapter of Tractate Shabbat (continued from the first session. New students are welcome to join.)

TALMUD INTERMEDIATE

[Rabbi Zvi Hirschfield](#)

Together we will learn the opening sugyot of the 16th chapter of tractate Shabbat which discusses the status of various texts and whether one may violate shabbat in order to rescue them from a fire.

In addition to the Talmudic text we will learn central medieval commentaries to expand our appreciation of the themes raised in the chapter and how they developed into Halakhic norms.

Essential Judaism for Jewish Educators Course

Day to Day Jewish Life - Creating Sparks How can we find the hidden Holiness (the sparks!) in everyday acts?

[Rabbi Reuven Margrett](#)

These sessions explore how Judaism takes seemingly mundane acts like the way we eat and talk and turns them into opportunities to raise up ourselves, others, and connect in a deeper way to God. We'll look at different elements that build a Jewish home and what individuals do to create an intentionally Jewish community. We'll have fun exploring a variety of commandments and texts encouraging us to transform the ordinary into the extraordinary.

Course #2, Bible/ Tanakh 7pm Israel, 12pm EDT

What Really Happened in Eden?

[Rabbi Mike Feuer](#)

ALL LEVELS

There is no more influential set of writings in the Western culture than the first three chapters of the book of Genesis. This class is an exploration in plain text and commentary of these chapters. Along the way we will consider models of relationship, the power of story to create and frame existence and the nature of the world in which we live.

"Where You Lead, I Will Follow"- What the Biblical Texts Have to Tell Us About Responsible Citizenship and "Followership"

[Rachel Margolin](#)

ALL LEVELS

The course will draw from various texts, largely from Sefer Bamidbar (Numbers) in order to analyze how the Torah perceives the role of "the follower" in Biblical society. We will explore the ideal model of followership in the Torah and its expectations around obedience, criticism of leadership, taking initiative.

We will utilize medieval and modern commentaries to further develop the text, as well as the literary approach to deepen our understanding of these texts.

More Underdogs in the Bible: Snatching Victory from the Jaws of Defeat

[Rabbi Dr. Howard Markose](#)

INTERMEDIATE -ADVANCED (Assumes good Hebrew ability)

This course is designed to take a close look at Biblical characters who seemed to have emerged unscathed (perhaps?) in spite of circumstances not looking good for them.

We will study episodes of our Tanach which include the characters Joseph, Leah, Tamar, Esther, and Job.

Each of these personalities became an 'underdog' of a sort when they faced a devastating incident which needed to be addressed either by them directly, or by some outside influence. We will examine the texts that recount the challenges as well as the 'rescues' that followed. Would we have moved the stories in that same way, or would we have wanted to suggest alternative outcomes to the episodes?

Essential Judaism for Jewish Educators Course***What's in a Year? Around the Jewish Calendar in Eight Days***

[Aviva Lauer](#)

This course will focus on the most fundamental and meaningful aspects of the Jewish calendar: our festivals, memorial days, and fast days. We will explore the texts, dates, rituals, values, symbols and songs of each holiday, as well as address the deeper question of why we celebrate or what we are commemorating. This series is tailored especially for Jewish educators who can draw directly from these sessions in planning their holiday programming and activities.

Course #3 Jewish Thought and Practice 9.10pm Israel, 2.10pm EDT***Going Down to Rise Up: The Jewish Wisdom of Harnessing Darkness to Move Towards the Light***

[Mira Niculescu](#)

ALL LEVELS

There is something apparently counterintuitive about the Jewish summer: as the days of sun get to their peak, Jews are invited to go into a progressive mourning mode, culminating with Tisha B'Av, the darkest day of the Jewish ritual calendar.

Yet just when we hit bottom, we start rising up again, with Tu B'Av, the day of the lovers, and then Ellul towards what Rav Kook has called the "light of Tshuvah".

Why diving into Darkness before we can rise up to the light? Isn't there a more linear path to resilience?

In a time of global Pandemic where so much of the world we knew has crumbled down, these questions take another level of significance.

In this course, through reading from Eicha, Iyov, Kohelet, Rabbi Nachman and Rav Kook, we will journey through questions of loss and hope and going down before going up, exploring the wisdom of harnessing darkness to move towards individual and collective resilience.

The Journey Towards Actualizing Our Best Selves - The Tanya

[Rabbi Zvi Hirschfield](#)

ALL LEVELS

Together we will study how the Tanya, written by R. Shneur Zalman of Lyady, the founding Rebbe of the Chabad movement, lays out an approach to discovering the Godly essence within ourselves and expressing it in all aspects of our lives. We will study his approach to the construct of the soul, the role of Torah and Mitzvot, causes for despair and how to overcome it, and other themes central to cultivating personal growth and greater spiritual awareness.

Essential Judaism for Jewish Educators Course

Shabbat – A SpiRitual Experience

[Rabbi Dr. Howard Markose](#)

This course will explore the emotional charge that Shabbat provides to its observers. We will also examine the sources of some elements of Shabbat observance. We will discuss, among the topics:

- a) “Positive” vs. “Negative” mitzvot (“Do”s vs. “Don’t”s) connected to Shabbat;
- b) Torah vs. Rabbinic mitzvot – What is the difference?
- c) Modern innovations regarding Shabbat observance.

Participants will be encouraged to bring to the discussion aspects of Shabbat that they have ‘always wondered about’ whose sources will be explored.