



**SACRED** FEB 28 - MAR 3  
**CONNECTIONS**  
RA CONVENTION 2021





The International Association of  
Conservative / Masorti Rabbis,  
established 1901

28 בפברואר 2021  
ט"ז באדר תשפ"א

חברות יקרותים,

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Founding Editor  
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ברוכים הבאים ל"קשרי קודש", ועידת כנסת הרבנים לשנת 2021! אנחנו מקווים שהגעתם בשלום למלון והצלחתם לאתר את המסעדות ושניפגש הערב בבר... או קיי, אולי לא. אמנם היינו רוצים שהקשרים המיידים הלא-וירטואליים היו יכולים להיווצר כעת, אבל אנחנו כן מעריכים את העובדה שהפורמט הנוכחי מאפשר לעמיתות יקרותים להשתתף בוועידה בצורה זו או אחרת ועל כך אנו מלאי תודה. תקוותנו היא שתקבעי עתים לחוות את "קשרי הקודש" שלנו. אנחנו שמחים מאד שניתנת לנו הזדמנות לחגוג את כנסת הרבנים של כולנו וליצור אתכם קשר.

מה הם "קשרי קודש"?

אנחנו מתאספים למרות הבדלים בשעה, בלשון, בסוג הקריירה הרבנית ובעוד מאפיינים. אנחנו לומדים מעמיתנו, ממורינו ומאורחות ימים מיוחדות. אנחנו משתתפים בקהילות ללימוד מקצועי (PLC – Professional Learning Communities) עם מנחים מיומנים ומוכשרים על מנת "לפשוט את מדי גיבורי-העל" שלנו ולשתף זה את זה בפתיחות ובביטחון. אנחנו מקבלים את פניה של פריה פארקר ונפגשים עם דניאל ספטימוס כשהם חולקים אתנו משהו מן החכמה והניסיון שלהם ומן החזון של כל אחת. ד. מהם לחיים העתידיים שלנו כרבות/רבנים.

"קשרי קודש" – עניינו הקשרים שבינינו. אנחנו מקוות ימים שתחפשי את מי שסיפקה לך השראה בבית המדרש לרבנים או בקריירה שלך. אנחנו מקווים שתתאחדי שוב עם ידידים ותיקים ושתכירי יחדות חדשות. אמנם לא ניפגש בתור לאוכל או במעלית, אבל היישומון שלנו יספק דרכים ליצור קשר. אנחנו מקווים שתנצלי את ההזדמנויות האלה.

שימי לב לאירועים המיוחדים!

במשך הימים הקרובים, אנא הצטרפי אלינו כשאנחנו...

- **מכבדים** את המוסמכים משנת 1970, החוגגים יובל כרבנים. מזל טוב לעמיתים אלה ולמשפחות!
- **זוכרים** את העמיתות ימים שהלכו לעולמם. בשנה האחרונה, יחד עם קרבנות מחלת הקורונה בעולם כולו.
- **חוגגים** את עמיתנו פמלה ברמש ואליוט דורף עבור התרומות והמנהיגות שלהם במסגרת ועד ההלכה והתקנים (Committee on Jewish Law and Standards) של כנסת הרבנים העולמית, במיוחד בתקופת מגפת הקורונה.
- **לומדים** על ההתקדמות של כנסת הרבנים שלנו, כולל המערך החדש של שיתוף פעולה עם ה-USCJ (ארגון הגג של הקהילות הקונסרבטיביות בצפון אמריקה), באסיפה הכללית השנתית/פורום פתוח, אירוע בו תהיינה הזדמנויות לתת משוב ולשאל שאלות.

מסורת ושינוי

יכול להיות שאתה קוראת את החומר הזה כחוברת מודפסת (כמה ימים לפני הכנס, כך אנו מקווים). ברור שפורמט כזה נראה מוזר עבור כנס מקוון, אבל הרי אנחנו עם הספר! תקוותנו היא שתוכנית מודפסת ביד נותנת תחושה של מסורת מוכרת, יחד עם כנס וירטואלי המעידה על ההתחדשות שבעבודתנו המשתנה והמתפתחת בכל עת לאחרונה. עם תהייה זקוקה להפסקה קצרה, אנה פניה להגיגים של עמיתנו החוגגים יובל כרבנים לקראת סוף החוברת.

שוב, ברוך הבאה! אנחנו מתרגשים לקראת קשרי קודש שייווצרו בימים הקרובים!

Rabbi Jacob Blumenthal  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Rabbi Stewart Vogel  
PRESIDENT



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*Founding Editor*  
Rabbi Jules Harlow

February 28, 2021  
16 Adar 5781

Dear חברים:

Welcome to Sacred Connections: Our 2021 RA Convention! We hope you are settled into the hotel, you've found the restaurants, and you will meet us for drinks at the bar tonight! Well, maybe not. And while we wish these in-person connections could happen right now, we appreciate that this format enables more of our colleagues to attend convention in some way, and for that, we are grateful. We hope you will set aside time and space to experience our Sacred Connections. We are thrilled to have this opportunity to celebrate our Rabbinical Assembly and to connect with you.

**What are our Sacred Connections?**

We **gather** across time zones, languages, rabbinic careers, and more. We **learn** from our colleagues, our teachers, and special guests. We **participate** in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to accomplish something together that we cannot do on our own. We **nourish** our souls by engaging in self-care (meditation, tefilah, yoga, art, and so much more!). We **join** Pandemic Processing Pods (PPPs) with skilled facilitators to "take off our superhero capes" and share openly and safely. We **welcome** Priya Parker and **engage** with Daniel Septimus as they share wisdom, experience, and vision for our future rabbinate.

Sacred Connections is about our connections with each other. We hope you will seek out those who inspired you in Rabbinical School or in your career. We hope you will reunite with old friends and make new ones. While we can't meet at the buffet line or in the elevator, our app will provide ways to connect and we hope you will take advantage of these opportunities.

**Please Note These Special Events**

Over the course of the coming days please also join us as we:

- **Honor** our rabbis ordained in 1970 who are celebrating 50 years in the rabbinate. Mazal tov to these colleagues and their families!
- **Remember** our colleagues who died this past year along with a special tribute to the global victims of COVID-19.
- **Celebrate** our colleagues Pamela Barmash and Elliot Dorff for their career contributions and leadership of our Rabbinical Assembly's Committee on Jewish Law and Standards (CJLS), particularly during the pandemic.
- **Learn** about the progress of Our RA, including our RA/USCJ alignment, in our Annual Meeting/Town Hall, which will also include opportunities for you to provide feedback and ask questions.

**Tradition and Change**

You might be reading this as a printed program in your hands (several days before convention, we hope). We know this physical format seems odd for a virtual convention, But we are the People of the Book! We hope holding a printed program offers a sense of tradition and comfort, while experiencing a virtual convention demonstrates the innovation of our changing and evolving rabinates. And when you need a break from the screen, please read the moving reflections written by our 50-year colleagues toward the end of this program.

Once again, welcome, and we are excited to form Sacred Connections in the days ahead!

Rabbi Jacob Blumenthal  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Rabbi Stewart Vogel  
PRESIDENT



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28 de Febrero de 2021  
16 de Adar de 5781

Queridos חברים:

Bienvenidos a Conexiones Sagradas, la Convención 2021 de la Asamblea Rabínica (AR). Esperamos que ya se hayan instalado en el hotel, ubicado los restaurantes, y que nos encontremos esta noche para beber unos tragos en el bar! O tal vez no. Si bien deseamos que estas conexiones presenciales fueran una realidad en este momento, estamos agradecidos por la posibilidad de este formato que permite que más colegas asistan a la convención. Esperamos que reserven tiempo y espacio para participar en la experiencia de Conexiones Sagradas. Nos encanta tener esta oportunidad de llevar a cabo nuestra Asamblea Rabínica y de conectarnos con ustedes.

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**¿Qué son nuestras Conexiones Sagradas?**

Nos **reunimos** atravesando zonas horarias, idiomas, carreras rabínicas y más. **Aprendemos** de nuestros colegas, docentes, e invitados especiales. **Participamos** en Comunidades de Aprendizaje Profesional (PLC en inglés) para lograr en conjunto objetivos que no podríamos conseguir individualmente. **Nutrimos** nuestras almas al dedicarnos al cuidado personal (meditación, tefila, yoga, actividades artísticas, y tantas otras). Participamos en Burbujas Sociales de Cuarentena (PPP en inglés) con moderadores especializados para "sacarnos las capas de superhéroes" y poder sociabilizar abiertamente y al mismo tiempo con seguridad. **Damos la bienvenida** a Priya Parker y nos **comprometemos** con Daniel Septimus que comparten su sensatez, experiencia y visión para nuestro futuro rabinato.

Conexiones Sagradas se refiere a nuestro contacto con el otro. Esperamos que traten de encontrar a quienes fueron su inspiración en el instituto de formación rabínica o a lo largo de su carrera. Deseamos que se puedan reunir con viejos amigos y conocer a otros nuevos. Si bien no nos podemos reunir en la cola del buffet o en el ascensor, nuestra app nos servirá para conectar con otros y esperamos que aprovechen estas oportunidades.

**Favor de tomar en cuenta estos eventos especiales**

En el curso de los próximos días comparta con nosotros las siguientes actividades:

- **Honar** a nuestros rabinos ordenados en 1970 que celebran 50 años en el rabinato. Mazal tov a los colegas y sus familias!
- **Recordar** a los colegas que fallecieron el año pasado y un tributo especial a las víctimas globales de COVID-19.
- **Agasajar** a nuestros colegas Pamela Barmash y Elliot Dorff por sus aportes a lo largo de su carrera y por liderar el Comité sobre Leyes y Normas Judías de la Asamblea Rabínica (CJLS en inglés), particularmente durante la pandemia.
- **Informarnos** sobre el avance de nuestra AR, incluyendo la convergencia de AR con USCJ, en nuestra Asamblea Anual/Ayuntamiento, que también ofrecerá un espacio para comentarios y preguntas.

**Tradición y Cambio**

Quizás esté leyendo esto como programa de mano impreso (esperamos que varios días antes de la convención). Sabemos que este formato físico parece raro para una convención virtual, Pero somos el Pueblo del Libro! Esperamos que el hecho de sostener en la mano un programa impreso transmita un sentido de tradición y confort, en tanto que la convención virtual demuestra la innovación de nuestros rabinatos en permanente cambio y evolución. Y cuando tenga necesidad de alejarse de la pantalla, por favor lea las sentidas reflexiones escritas por nuestros colegas de 50 años que se encuentran al final del programa.

Una vez más, bienvenidos, y nos entusiasma la idea de formar Conexiones Sagradas en los próximos días!

Rabbi Jacob Blumenthal  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Rabbi Stewart Vogel  
PRESIDENT

# WELCOME!

## OFFICERS

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**Rabbi Harold Kravitz**, vice president  
**Rabbi Jay Kornsgold**, treasurer  
**Rabbi Gesa Ederberg**, financial secretary  
**Rabbi Aaron Brusso**, secretary  
**Rabbi Jacob Blumenthal**, chief executive officer

## CONVENTION COMMITTEE

### Convention Planning Focus Group

Rabbi Yonina Creditor, Rabbi Mikie Goldstein, Rabbi Reuven Greenvald, Rabbi Joshua Gruenberg, Rabbi Sherre Hirsch, Rabbi David-Seth Kirshner, Rabbi Amy Levin, Rabbi Natasha Mann, Rabbi Rachel Marder, Rabbi Beth Naditch, Rabbi Michael Safra, Rabbi Zachary Silver, Rabbi Phil Warmflash, Rabbi Melinda Zalma

### Limmud Task Force

Rabbi Neil Cooper, Rabbi Aviva Fellman, Rabbi Ben Lanckton, Rabbi Rachel Marder, Rabbi Dan Ornstein, Rabbi Carnie Rose, Rabbi Gordon Tucker

### Social Connections Task Force

Rabbi Mijael Even David, Rabbi Gesa Ederberg, Rabbi Jeremy Fine, Rabbi Robyn Fryer Bodzin, Rabbi Adam Stein, Rabbi Jenna Turow, Rabbi Becca Walker

Ex officio: Rabbi Ilana Garber, Rabbi Sheryl Katzman, Max Arad

## USING SWAPCARD

This year's convention will take place predominantly on the SwapCard convention app. All participants should have received an email with instructions on how to join the app, which is accessible from both your computer and your phone. In the app, you can view the entire schedule and "register" for specific sessions, which will add those sessions to your personal "My Event" page. You can even export your customized event schedule into your own calendar.

To join a session for which you have registered, click on it from the Agenda or My Event page, and then click on the red button that says "Join the Session". This will open a regular Zoom window that will function externally to SwapCard, just as any other Zoom works. When you are done with the session, you can return to SwapCard to access other sessions. Many of the sessions will be recorded and recordings of each session will be posted to the session pages on the app once they are available.

See Social Connections on page 4 to learn how to use the app functions to foster social connections throughout convention.

## SOCIAL CONNECTIONS AT CONVENTION

One of the greatest joys of convention are the social connections that take place throughout the gathering. We come to convention to reconnect with beloved friends, and meet new colleagues who expand our network of support and strengthen our work. Through chance introductions in the buffet line, or dedicated time to eat a meal with a friend, these are the relationships that enrich our lives.

With the benefit of almost a year of creating sacred connections through technology, we have created opportunities to allow us to experience the convention connections that nourish our *neshamot*. With a little extra effort, and through the convention App and the powers of Zoom, this year's convention is designed to help us engage in all of these Sacred Connections.

### ATTENDEES SECTION ON CONVENTION APP

When you go to the "Attendees" section, you will see a list of every convention attendee. If you click on a name, you will see the option to connect with that person. Once you do, you can send direct messages back and forth to chat with friends throughout convention! You can also see their availability for a virtual meetup and schedule a one-on-one video conference directly in SwapCard.

**Check-in with Friends:** Send a message to a friend to meet for a cup of coffee or enjoy a breakfast bagel during the "social times" on the schedule or in between sessions. (Use the app for a virtual chat or connect the old fashioned way—on the phone!)

**Meet New Colleagues:** Send a message to someone you don't know and ask for a time to meet. Did someone make an interesting comment in a limmud session that you want to ask about? Is there someone engaging in work that you want to learn more about? You won't bump into them in the elevator but you can send a message and set up a time to pull up a chair in the "lobby" of your home.

### DISCUSSION BOARD APP FUNCTION

We hope you will make use of our Discussion Board. There will be a number of set topics on which you can comment and you will also be able to suggest new discussion topics to be added to the board. We realize the experience of a convention app will be new to many. Please use the "contact app support" feature for questions on how to use it.

**Check-in with Friends:** Post a subject, day, time, and Zoom link on the discussion board inviting people to join you. Organize a small group reunion like "Lunch with the Machon Schechter class of 1985" or "Afternoon tea with the RA trip to Argentina."

**Meet New Colleagues:** Reach out to people with a shared affinity like "sourdough bread bakers" or "hiking rabbis". Find rabbis with a shared area of work interest like "engaging teens" or "teaching Pirkei Avot." Take the first step to host a gathering of new colleagues.

## CONVENTION SESSIONS: MEET NEW COLLEAGUES

**Designed Social Experiences:** How can we simulate the chance conversation in the buffet line, or the fortuitous elevator ride that begins a lasting friendship? Join us during the convention “social times” for the chance to meet new colleagues. Sunday we will open convention with a chance to drop in and see “who is in the room”. Monday’s “chance” social time will focus on professional networking. Tuesday’s social gatherings will focus on developing personal connections.

**Keynote Break Out Room:** Following Priya Parker’s Keynote address we will break into small groups (facilitated by our campus rabbis—thank you!) to get to know a new group of colleagues and spend time reflecting on her principles of gathering and sharing how we use or hope to use these ideas in our personal and professional settings.

**Open Schmooze Hospitality Room:** BYOD, Bring Your Own Drink— coffee, wine, or tea depending on your time zone! Drop in and see who’s around—enjoy a chance meeting with an old friend or a new connection. Stay in the main room, or request a breakout room for a more private conversation.

**RA Leadership Schmooze:** Join one of these sessions during the “social time” to connect with RA lay and professional leadership. This will be an informal chance to ask questions, share ideas, and simply say hello.

## IN MEMORIAM

Azkarah in memory of our colleagues and their spouses will take place on Wednesday morning at 10:30 AM ET and will be led by Rabbi Gerry Skolnik and Rabbi Julia Andelman.

## JOINT RETIREMENT BOARD

Mitchell J. Smilowitz, CPA—Chief Executive Officer of the JRB—will be available for personal consultations to review your retirement/financial planning goals on March 4, 8 & 9, 2021 (after convention). You can call the JRB office at **1-888-JRB-FREE** or email [carmen@jrbcj.org](mailto:carmen@jrbcj.org) to set up a time to meet. If these dates do not work, please call or email the JRB to arrange a consultation when it is more convenient for you.

## RA CAREER RESOURCE CENTER

To meet with our RA Career Resource Center staff, please visit the scheduling calendars of Rabbi Ilana Garber, director of global rabbinic development ([www.calendly.com/igarber](http://www.calendly.com/igarber)) and Emily Hendel, director of career services ([www.calendly.com/emilyhendel](http://www.calendly.com/emilyhendel)). Rabbi Bill Lebeau, senior consultant for rabbinic and institutional leadership, will also be available for private meetings. Please email [blebeau@rabbinicalassembly.org](mailto:blebeau@rabbinicalassembly.org) to set up an appointment.

## SESSION RECORDINGS

The limmud and keynote sessions will be recorded and posted on SwapCard during convention, and will remain there indefinitely.

## SPECIAL THANKS TO

Christine Aucoin  
Diana Denza  
Sasha Mastriano  
Gina Morales

## SOCIAL MEDIA AT CONVENTION

We'll be blogging, posting and tweeting during convention.

Check out our blog: [rabbinicalassembly.org/news-events/blog](http://rabbinicalassembly.org/news-events/blog).

Follow our tweets [@RabbiAssembly](https://twitter.com/RabbiAssembly) or post your own and tag us at **#RAConv21** and **#RASacredConnections**.

Also check out our page on Facebook: [facebook.com/RabbinicalAssembly](https://facebook.com/RabbinicalAssembly).

# SCHEDULE

**A note about time zones:** the online schedule in the app and on our website will automatically display the times in your own timezone. Time zones in this book are listed for those times when it would be reasonable to attend (though you are of course welcome to get up at 6 am or stay up until midnight!) Many sessions will be recorded, so you can always go back to watch a session whose timing does not work for you.

## SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28<sup>TH</sup>

### 12-1:15 PM ET / 9-10:15 AM PT / 7-8:15 PM ISRAEL WHO'S IN THE ZOOM?

This is the first opportunity to meet new colleagues and connect with cherished friends. Through a mix of large and small group sharing we will greet each other and discover who came to convention. Come spend time in “class groupings” as well as chance encounters.

### 2-3:30 PM ET / 11 AM - 12:30 PM PT / 9-10:30 PM ISRAEL TED TEXT: TZEI U'LMAD

We continue our Sacred Connections by sharing our sacred texts. Let's get ready for Pesah by sharing our Seder Hidushim. Themes include racial justice, climate change, economic inequality, qualities of leadership, immigration, and gender roles.

### 4-5 PM ET / 1-2 PM PT SELF-CARE HOUR

#### **Creative Expression** | KOHENET RACHEL KANN

Kohenet Rachel Kann leads us on a prompt-based guided journey. Bring your favorite way to express yourself: writing, drawing, painting, dancing, an instrument, or just curl up and experience a guided meditation. Soothing, nourishing, and generative. Please bring whatever supplies support you in your personal creative expression. A pen and paper are just perfect and more than enough. You could also simply use your computer's word processing program or notes app on your phone. Other things that could be supportive but are not necessary include markers, paint, canvas or poster board, drum, guitar, cozy pillow.



***Pandemic Processing Pod: Personal Loss During Global Grief*** | RABBI BETH NADITCH

Share your personal experiences of loss and grief during a year in which so many of us were also carrying others, supporting individuals and communities. Although only some are mourning losses due to COVID, any loss that has occurred during these times has been significantly impacted by COVID. This is a space where we can take off our professional mantles, share with each other, and offer and receive support from colleagues.

***Lasim Lev: Jewish Mindfulness*** | RABBI DOROTHY RICHMAN

Join with colleagues for guided mindfulness practice. If there is interest, we can also discuss how meditation works (and doesn't work), and what makes it Jewish. No prior experience necessary. All (including skeptics) welcome.

***"A Golden Spoon... full of incense" (Numbers 7:14) - Make a Ritual Object*** | DAFNA ROBINSON AND RABBI DAN ROSENBERG

"The night of the fourteenth, we examine for hametz by the light of a lamp" (m. Pesahim 1:1)—it is a familiar custom to search, in our time symbolically, for the hametz remaining in the house just before Pesah. A basic kit includes a light of some sort, a sweeping object (often a feather), and a receptacle—a bag or wooden spoon—for the disposal of the chametz. The spoon might be ephemeral, and might also present an opportunity to engage in hiddur mitzvah, elevating a religious observance with intentional adornment and decorative crafting. This workshop will fold together storytelling, some learning about the making of Jewish ritual objects, and an opportunity to decorate your own 3-dimensional (or 2-dimensional) spoon for gathering of hametz. This is a great workshop for your own personal calm and creativity, or for sparking ideas for religious and family education.

***Pandemic Processing Pod: Out of Order - Being a Rabbi in a Pandemic*** | RABBI MYCHAL SPRINGER

An opportunity to come together with others who are feeling the impact of a world turned upside down while trying to hold steady.

MONDAY, MARCH 1<sup>ST</sup>

**8 - 8:45 AM ET / 3 - 3:45 PM ISRAEL**  
**SOCIAL TIME**

***Open Schmooze Room - Hospitality Room***

BYOD—Bring your own drink—coffee, wine, or tea depending on your time zone! Drop in and see who's around—enjoy a chance meeting with an old friend or a new connection. Stay in the main room, or request a breakout room for a more private conversation.

### ***Professional Networking Speed Dating***

Wondering what interesting new projects colleagues are working on? Curious if you are the only one staying up at night worried about a particular issue? Looking for tips and tricks colleagues have learned to sustain themselves during this time? Come for an hour of speed dating to build professional connections with colleagues.

**9 - 10:15 AM ET / 4 - 5:15 PM ISRAEL**

**LIMMUD**

### ***The Tale of Leaving Egypt in Haste* | RABBI CHAYA ROWEN BAKER**

What is the role and power of haste as we seek inspiration and resilience? An attempt at a new reading of our seminal story of redemption.

### ***Freedom: The Western vs. the Jewish Sides of Our Identity* | RABBI DR. ELLIOT DORFF**

All of us who live in countries affected by the Enlightenment enjoy individual liberty to degrees that vary from one nation to another. Freedom in Jewish sources is also cherished, but with a very different meaning. In this session we will consider some fundamental sources in the Torah and classical Rabbinic literature in contrast to some fundamental sources in Western thought, as illustrated by American legal documents, to describe the differing pictures of what freedom means in these two ways of understanding ourselves as individuals and as members of a society. We will then study how they clash by looking at Napoleon's questions to the French Sanhedrin, and discuss how we modern Jews nevertheless balance these two concepts of freedom in our identity as Western Jews.

### ***The Spiritual / Mystical Secret Behind Bittul Chametz – A Family Affair* | REB MIMI FEIGELSON**

Weaving a chavruta between the Ishbitzer rebbe, the Mei HaShiloach, and his son, the Beit Ya'akov, we are invited into the mystique of the one significant moment that transforms the complete status of our homes and hearts. In the mystical, and psycho-spiritual realm, how does 'Bittul Chametz' promote our trajectory to liberation? And had the Ma'or Aynayim, the Chernobler rebbe, joined their learning, how would he have challenged them, turning their paradigm inside-out or perhaps upside-down?

### ***Essential Values of Judaism in Times of Stress and Change* | RABBI DAVID GOLINKIN**

We shall explore five Jewish values which can help us cope with the current crisis.

### ***Where Did All the Goddesses Go? Assimilating the Feminine in Biblical Monotheism* |**

DR. DEENA GRANT

The God of Israel depicted in the Hebrew Bible did not emerge in a vacuum. On the contrary, numerous gods and goddesses abounded in the Ancient Near East, with each god controlling their own domain. For instance, goddesses were typically charged with tending to fertility and childbirth. In this lecture we will analyze texts and iconography in order to understand how the portrait of a single, anthropomorphically male God attains prominence in the Hebrew Bible. With this knowledge, we are afforded the opportunity to revisit our own concepts of divinity.

### ***Retelling the Exodus: Folk-Art, Text and Current Events*** | RABBI DAVID LAZAR

How might illustrations from Haggadot published over the last 4 centuries, coupled with rabbinic texts, inform a 21st century view of freedom, liberation and peoplehood? We will search for answers by surveying materials from the Gross Family Collection, Tel Aviv.

### ***When Law Kills: Facing Systemic Injustice*** | RABBI GORDON TUCKER

Who killed Breonna Taylor? Who created Abu Ghraib? Rogue police officers and soldiers, or something bigger and more systemic? We'll address these questions and what they mean for us today by considering texts from Tanakh, midrashic literature, Martin Luther King, and a prominent American jurist.

### ***La "Caída" del Esav bíblico en la Literatura Rabínica*** | RABBI FELIPE CARLOS YAFE

Encararemos el análisis de este personaje bíblico a partir de un abordaje al entorno textual en el cual éste se hace presente. En este contexto, nos detendremos particularmente en su accionar frente a su hermano Jacob y a sus progenitores Rebecca e Isaak. A su vez, intentaremos acceder a un entendimiento lo más cabal posible respecto de su perfil caracterológico tal como se nos presenta en la narrativa del Génesis.

Al mismo tiempo, analizaremos también la imagen que se nos ofrece de Esav, esta vez en las fuentes rabínicas y exegéticas. El propósito de ello será poder abreviar en los contrastes, diferencias y contradicciones que ambos testimonios exhiben.

En esta misma línea de indagación, trataremos de ahondar en los motivos por los cuales estas aparente incongruencias pudieron haberse instalado a través de los siglos.

¿Qué podría haber llevado a un significativo número de nuestros sabios medievales a cerrar sus ojos a las ostensibles faltas de Jacob en desmedro de su hermano? ¿Por qué motivo se optó por "lecturas" del texto bíblico claramente hostiles hacia este personaje quien sin ser un dechado de virtudes en el relato bíblico, está lejos de exhibir el perfil de "villano" que sistemáticamente se buscó adjudicarle?

## **10:30 - 11:30 AM ET / 5:30 - 6:30 PM ISRAEL** **SELF-CARE HOUR**

### ***Pandemic Processing Pod: Cultivating Self Compassion*** | RABBI NAOMI KALISH

Being present to the stories, emotions, and pain of those we care for can leave us feeling depleted. In this session we will explore developing a practice of self compassion. Participants will have the opportunity to share and reflect on their own personal and professional experience of the pandemic.

### ***Pandemic Processing Pod: Compassion Fatigue – Who Cares for Caregivers?*** | RABBI BEN LANCKTON

As rabbis and spiritual care providers, we are called upon to provide care when others are suffering. But in an extended global pandemic, we are not only all on the front lines; as one of my nurses explained, "We are all behind enemy lines." What sources—in our communities, in our families, in our practices and in our tradition—can we use to renew and refresh ourselves as we continue to provide care? This session will present a few examples and then provide a format for sharing strategies.

### **Mosaic with Mia** | MIA SCHON

Join Israel based Mosaic Muralist, Mia Schon for a one-hour paper mosaic workshop via Zoom. Participants will learn how to creatively repurpose magazines to create a beautiful Tree of Life design. Explore this new technique piece by piece as you bring these trees to life. This workshop is for all levels. Beginners welcome. Participants must provide their own materials: Glue Stick, Magazine(s), 8.5 x 11 inch printer paper, Scissors, Pencil.

### **Heart Centering Tefilah** | YOEL SYKES

Join Yoel Sykes from Nava Tehila for tefilah & meditation.

## **12-2 PM ET / 9-11 AM PT / 7-9 PM ISRAEL** **PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES**

### **OUR CAREERS: STRENGTHENING AND SUPPORTING**

#### ***What defines career fulfillment?*** | FACILITATORS: RABBI AARON BRUSSO AND DR. STEPHEN TREAT

Take a pause to consider this question and develop your own metrics of success. With the guidance of an expert in the area of Career Fulfillment, we will consider how to define rabbinic success in various settings, and identify the criteria that we consider when forming this definition (i.e. what do we mean by impact, what role do numbers and setting play in our definition). How can we use our interests and passions to develop definitions of success and fulfillment?

#### ***How can we strengthen ourselves to receive and respond to critical feedback?*** |

FACILITATORS: DR. DONNA HICKS AND RABBI MELINDA ZALMA

Strengthening our response to critical feedback has the potential to open up conversations that honor our own dignity and the dignity of each individual. In many rabbinic professional settings we are called upon to give and receive critical feedback. This feedback is sometimes solicited, and also comes at times when we are not prepared to be in this mode of communication. We will use the Dignity Model to develop a set of tools and techniques that will help us turn offensive and disrespectful moments into opportunities to deepen personal relationships.

#### ***How can we use understandings about women and power to build a healthier rabbinate?*** |

FACILITATORS: GLORIA FELDT AND RABBI ILANA GARBER

In its boldest phrasing we will ask: How will we smash the patriarchy and build a healthier rabbinate? This question holds within it these essential questions 1) How is power within the rabbinate defined now and how do we want it to be defined intentionally so that as women we can contribute our full gifts to our profession and be valued for it? 2) What are concrete steps to make that change happen for ourselves and the rabbinate as a whole? *This group is for women only.*

## ***What are the concrete steps we can take to plan for a meaningful and fulfilling retirement?*** |

FACILITATORS: RABBIS MARK GREENSPAN AND HOWARD HOFFMAN

This PLC is intended for those planning for retirement in 1-3 years. We will explore several important transitions to consider as we plan for this next phase of our careers. Mitch Smilowitz will join us to help us develop a sound financial plan. Retired colleagues will share their wisdom and experience to help us with the emotional, spiritual, and tachlis plans that pave the way for meaning and fulfillment.

## **OUR TORAH: DESIGNING A POST-COVID WORLD**

***What do end of life rituals look like in a virtual age?*** | FACILITATORS: RABBI DAVID LEVIN AND RABBI ANNE BRENNER

How will we use and design rituals connected to grief and mourning that will hold a light to the unprocessed grief of the past year? How can we create new end of life rituals as our post-pandemic world evolves? Together we will design mourning and grieving rituals that will help us move to a post-pandemic period.

***How can we use our tradition and innovation to design a ritual that marks our transition to a post-pandemic time?*** | FACILITATOR: RABBI GUIDO COHEN

During our time together we will utilize old rituals in a new way, and introduce new ritual possibilities, to honor the experience of the pandemic—acknowledging our gratitude for those who helped us through, and mourning the losses we experienced. Drawing on rituals that help us mark the passage from one period of time, and one state of being to the next, we will develop a ritual to help guide our communities through this important transition.

***What parts of our pandemic were ruled only in response to she'at hadehak and what can be carried over to the post-pandemic time?*** | FACILITATOR: RABBI JOSHUA HELLER

The teshuvot written to respond to the pandemic created a new reality. Which practices are truly *hora'at sha'ah*, and how do we determine when that situation no longer applies? What constitutes *she'at hadehak*, and which practices should be considered on an ongoing basis as “norms” for our practice? This group will work with Joshua Heller to advise on the next teshuvot to be developed by the CJLS.

## **OUR TRUTHS: DOVER EMET**

***How can I effectively add my voice to issues of social justice/public policy?*** |

FACILITATORS: RABBI JAY KORNSGOLD AND RABBI ANDI MEROW

Participants will have the opportunity to discuss the complexities of bringing the rabbinic voice to this arena of discourse, and will learn strategies for navigating those complexities with the guidance of experienced colleagues. During our time together we will each work to develop a piece of writing related to an issue of social justice/public policy for publication in a newspaper or blog. Novice and experienced colleagues will develop an individual piece that will benefit from collegial feedback. Our time together will include the chance to workshop our writing for feedback. We will be joined by our colleagues Rabbi Gerald Skolnik, Rabbi Danya Ruttenberg, and Rabbi David Wolpe. In addition, Jodi Rudoren, editor of the Forward and Sarah Hurwitz, former speechwriter for First Lady Michelle Obama will guide our experience.

### ***What does it mean to be a proximate in the fight for racial justice? |***

FACILITATOR: RABBI REUVEN GREENVALD

Where have we found success, and what are the stumbling blocks that we encounter in this work? Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. taught that authentic racial justice work happens in physical proximity and spiritual affinity. Jewish proximity to racial justice comes in several forms—some of us as Jews of color and parents/partners of people of color, many of us in allyship. This group will focus on gathering the work we are doing individually for racial justice in order to harness our varied experiences towards deeper affinity and concerted efforts in this important arena. During these three days, we will tap into our collective wisdom to support the development of an action plan to guide our next steps. Rabbi Stephanie Ruskey, Asst. Dean of the JTS Rabbinical School will be among the guest experts supporting our conversation.

### **OUR INNOVATION: ENGAGEMENT**

#### ***How do we cultivate and maximize collaborative partnerships to deliver best in class digital learning to the broadest audiences possible? |*** FACILITATOR: RABBI SHERRE HIRSCH

Everyone has experienced a great need for digital learning with limited sources for doing so. And we all have a desire to deliver broad, deep, top-tier content beyond what we can do on our own. These three sessions will be a focus group to inform the launch of a platform that can serve multiple partners to bring Jewish wisdom to all.

#### ***How can we effectively serve the spiritual needs of adults with memory loss in our communities? |***

FACILITATORS: SHERYL HARAWITZ, RABBI JUDITH HAUPTMAN, JULIE ROCKOWITZ

Through the lens of designing a Kabbalat Shabbat service for individuals impacted by Alzheimer's/dementia and their families, we will consider how we can provide spiritual support to families impacted by memory loss. What are the reasons someone would participate in a Kabbalat Shabbat service aimed at people with Alzheimer's/dementia and their caregivers? We will share what we have learned from our experiences with people living with memory loss and their caregivers to develop new models of tefillah that provide spiritual fulfillment and meaningful community. Meredith Wong, manager of Connect2Culture at CaringKind, an organization dedicated to meeting the needs of people with dementia will join us to help apply the principles used to design museum programs targeted to reach people with memory loss to Friday night tefillah experiences.

#### ***How do we retain and recruit the next generation of Jewish educators for our institutions? |***

FACILITATOR: RABBI JEREMY WINAKER

We are facing a time of great shifts in Jewish education. Currently our educational institutions are facing high retirement numbers. At the same time, we are noticing the trend of Millennial "bounce" where many of our most engaged young adults do not go on to assume leadership roles. How can we use our understanding of millennials and Gen Z to improve the educator pipeline? Dr. Shira Epstein, Dean of the Davidson School of Education, JTS and Mike Uram, Chief Vision and Education Officer of Pardes North America will be among the guest experts supporting our conversation.

**2:30 - 3 PM ET / 11:30 AM - 12 PM PT / 9:30 - 10 PM ISRAEL**

## **HONORING OUR 50 YEAR COLLEAGUES**

PRESIDING: RABBI STEWART VOGEL

CLASS SPEAKER: RABBI JOEL REMBAUM

**3 - 3:45 PM ET / 12 - 12:45 PM PT / 10 - 10:45 PM ISRAEL**

## **RA TOWN HALL (ANNUAL MEETING)**

Learn about the USCJ-RA Partnership from Rabbi Jacob Blumenthal, hear about our finances, and participate in decisions as we certify our election results and vote in our new members. Reports will be followed by breakout rooms where members can participate in small group discussions based on areas of particular interest.

**4 - 5:15 PM ET / 1 - 2:15 PM PT**

## **LIMMUD**

***Five Facets of Freedom*** | RABBI BRADLEY SHAVIT ARTSON

We explore Passover's elaboration of five aspects of freedom: that freedom emerges from authenticity and integrity, can't be achieved alone, integrates justice & mercy, is self-surpassing, and must be learned.

***Exodus in the Spiritual Imagination of Prophets and Psalmists*** | RABBI PAMELA BARMASH

We will explore how the prophets and psalmists reshaped Exodus themes to bring hope and comfort to people in despair.

***Jewish Wisdom for Dismantling Racism*** | RABBI AMY EILBERG

In this time of national teshuva over racism in the U.S., we turn to Jewish text and to one another to deepen our understanding of race and racism. The texts will guide our wrestling with challenging questions about how we unwittingly participate in racist systems, and about the complexities of anti-racist work for white Jews. This session will point all of us toward the next stages of work for us to become full partners in the dismantling of racism in America.

***The Improvisational Rabbi*** | RABBI ED FEINSTEIN

Ever feel you're a half-a-step behind? You're not alone. The modern rabbinate has always been a project of improvisation—playing roles we weren't trained for, winging it, making it up as we go along. The greatest among us found their way by connecting with a deep strain of creativity within the Jewish spirit. We can learn to do the same.

***The Psalms as Spiritual Process*** | RABBI MIRIAM GLAZER

To enter deeply into a Psalm is to engage in a spiritual journey: sometimes tumultuous, sometimes ever-deepening and joyous. Drawing on both ancient spiritual practices and on an understanding of how poetry works, we will engage with several of the Psalms in the hope of expanding and deepening participants' appreciation of them both as poetry and as vehicles for spiritual growth.

***Jewish Roots for Crisis (Spanish)*** | RABBI MARCELO POLAKOFF

We will explore different traditional approaches for the **ש.ב.ר.** root, trying to develop a better understanding of the concept of crisis and how to respond to them.

***Seeing Angels in the Shadow Death*** | RABBI AHUD SELA

For anyone who has suffered loss, or is facing a personal trial, the pain can be overwhelming, and you might feel at a loss as to where to look for healing. From a young age I have wondered about the day that I will die and what my life will have meant. At the age of twenty-two, I was confronted by death in the form of cancer, and then again at age thirty-three in the form of heart disease. Those events helped clarify for me what direction my life should take, but only with the help of other people, my angels in the shadow of death. They helped show me the light when all I saw was darkness. And now I try to be an angel myself, to help those who feel like they are living in death's dark shadow. We should never have to suffer alone. This is the story of my journey from illness to health, from darkness to light, and I hope that it brings healing and light to all who read it.

**7:30 - 8:30 PM ET / 4:30 - 5:30 PM PT**  
**SELF-CARE HOUR**

***Looking toward Redemption: A Service of Healing and Hope*** | RABBI PAULA MACK DRILL AND AMICHA MARGOLIS

Through a combination of prayer and poetry, song, and meditation, we will gather as a community to lift our spirits as we head toward Passover still in the midst of quarantine and shut-downs.

***Pandemic Processing Pod: A Blessing on Your Head!*** | RABBI NAOMI LEVY

During this pandemic you've been giving and giving, this session will be a time for you to receive blessings, to share what blessings you are seeking, and to strengthen one another with hope and healing and friendship.

***Kosher Fitness*** | RABBI MICHAEL UNGAR

Put on your gym clothes and join our colleague, Michael Ungar, as he leads us in an all-levels exercise class infused with Torah and friendship.

***Reverse Tie-Dye Hang Out*** | RABBI BECCA WALKER AND RABBI ARIELLA ROSEN

Make something fun with your hands. Maybe it's your first time, maybe this is a throw back to your fave camp activity. All you need is some dark-colored fabric to dye (t-shirt, cloth napkin, etc), bleach and rubber bands. Also gloves recommended to protect your hands. This session will take place in your bathroom over the tub or a big kitchen sink. Becca and Ariella will walk you through the process and you will end the session with a super cool revamped item.

## 9-10 PM ET / 6-7 PM PT SOCIAL TIME

### ***Open Schmooze Room - Hospitality Room***

BYOD—Bring your own drink—coffee, wine, or tea depending on your time zone! Drop in and see who's around—enjoy a chance meeting with an old friend or a new connection. Stay in the main room, or request a breakout room for a more private conversation.

### ***Professional Networking Speed Dating***

Wondering what interesting new projects colleagues are working on? Curious if you are the only one staying up at night worried about a particular issue? Looking for tips and tricks colleagues have learned to sustain themselves during this time? Come for an hour of speed dating to build professional connections with colleagues.

### ***RA Leadership Schmooze***

Rabbi Jacob Blumenthal and members of our RA Administrative Committee will be available to schmooze. This will be an informal opportunity to ask questions, share ideas, or simply to say hello.

## TUESDAY, MARCH 2<sup>ND</sup>

## 8-9 AM ET / 3-4 PM ISRAEL SOCIAL TIME

### ***Open Schmooze Room - Hospitality Room***

BYOD—Bring your own drink—coffee, wine, or tea depending on your time zone! Drop in and see who's around—enjoy a chance meeting with an old friend or a new connection. Stay in the main room, or request a breakout room for a more private conversation.

### ***Personal Connections Scavenger Hunt***

Come for an hour of personal introductions as we get to know each other through the “artifacts” in our homes. What do you keep on your desk to bring you joy? What object reminds you of a significant moment? Is there something in your office that you have no idea how to use? Come share the wacky and sentimental artifacts that help us get to know each other.

## 10-11:30 AM ET / 5-6:30 PM ISRAEL

## RUDERMAN SYNAGOGUE INCLUSION PROJECT MENTAL HEALTH PANDEMIC PROCESSING PODS

### ***Compassion Fatigue: Walking the Delicate Balance*** | MARY JO BARRETT

There's a delicate balance between taking care of others and taking care of ourselves. How can we manage?

***When Working from Home Becomes Living at Work*** | LINDA STONE FISH

Life/Work balance has taken on new meaning during the pandemic. What can we do?

***Life Interrupted: When Your Empty Nest Fills Up with Young Adults*** | RABBI MARSHA FRIEDMAN

Many of us have young adult children, college age or beyond, who have had their lives interrupted and are living at home again. Let's talk about the impact this has had on us and our own lives and share ideas about how to deal with this unexpected turn of events.

***Sharing, Shifting and Flourishing – Finding Meaning and Renewal*** | NATALIE HYATT

This pandemic has disrupted our lives and brought about unpredictable change. Find meaning and start on the track to flourishing again.

***Pastoral/Emotional Boundaries in the Age of the Pandemic*** | RABBI E. NOACH SHAPIRO

The role of rabbi has always been complex and multidimensional. As a result, distinguishing clear boundaries between our 'personal lives' and our role as pastoral caregivers has been challenging. In the age of the pandemic, these boundaries that some of us have been carefully crafting for years suddenly seem nearly impossible. The reason for this is as simple as it is challenging: all of us—pastoral caregivers—and many of those receiving our care are sharing deeply similar, if not mirrored, emotional and spiritual experiences. The result can be a sense of existential exhaustion. Let's think together about the ways we can respond to what sometimes feels like a relentless demand on our emotional resources while authentically remaining the rabbis and humans we are, have been and want to be—all without our friends, family, children, partners, or ourselves paying the emotional price. In short, how do we find balance and even renewal in the age of the pandemic?

**12 - 1:30 PM ET / 9 - 10:30 AM PT / 7 - 8:30 PM ISRAEL**

**PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES (SEE PAGE 11 FOR DETAILS)**

**3 - 4:45 PM ET / 12 - 1:45 PM PT / 10 - 11:45 PM ISRAEL**

**HOW TO BE TOGETHER APART: A FIRESIDE CHAT WITH PRIYA PARKER**

***Niggun & Nourishment*** | RABBIS YOSEF GOLDMAN, BARRY DOV KATZ, ADAM KLIGFELD, JOSH WARSHAWSKY, ARIEL ROOT WOLPE, AND RABBI CANTOR HILLARY CHORNY

Introduction: Rabbi Debra Newman Kamin

Fireside Chat: Priya Parker and Rabbi Jacob Blumenthal

Moderator: Rabbi Aaron Brusso

Breakouts: Rabbis Michelle Dardashti, Leah Fein, Michelle Fisher, Megan GoldMarche, Judy Greenberg, Adam Naftalin-Kelman, Daniel Novick, Esther Reed, Ariella Rosen, Jason Rubenstein, Ilan Schwartz, Bruce Bromberg Seltzer, Jenna Turow, Mike Uram, Sara Zacharia

As the world shifts to physical distancing during the coronavirus pandemic, the practical questions about gatherings (“Should we postpone or switch to a virtual event?”) are quickly transforming into spiritual ones: “Is this needed? Who is it for? And who gets to decide?” In her innovative New York Times op-ed, “How We Gather Digitally Now,” Priya Parker writes, “This heavy time could be leavened by the new rituals it created, the unlikely intimacies it fostered and the ways in which it revealed that convening people is a special privilege that ought never to be taken for granted.” Through virtual conversations with audiences, Parker shares how to invent creative, meaningful ways of being apart to provide comfort, create rituals, and foster togetherness during unpredictable times.

Our College Campus professionals will lead us in breakout discussions where we will have the chance to consider how we can apply the principles of gathering raised by Priya Parker to our own settings. Share the unexpected innovations you have created during this time, and think together about how Parker’s approach to gathering can help you deepen the sacred connections in your own *kehillot kedoshot*.

**7:30 - 8:30 PM ET / 4:30 - 5:30 PM PT**

## **ANNUAL CAMPAIGN TRIBUTE HONORING RABBI ELLIOT DORFF AND RABBI PAMELA BARMASH**

Introduction: Rabbi Cheryl Peretz

Musical Performances: Craig Taubman, Rabbi Josh Warshawsky, Rabbi Aviva Funke

Honorees: Rabbi Pamela Barmash and Rabbi Elliot Dorff

Closing: Rabbi Harold Kravitz

**8:30 - 9:30 PM ET / 5:30 - 6:30 PM PT**

## **SOCIAL TIME**

### ***Open Schmooze Room - Hospitality Room***

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Come for an hour of personal introductions as we get to know each other through the “artifacts” in our homes. What do you keep on your desk to bring you joy? What object reminds you of a significant moment? Is there something in your office that you have no idea how to use? Share the wacky and sentimental artifacts that help us get to know each other.

### ***RA Leadership Schmooze***

Rabbi Jacob Blumenthal and members of our RA Administrative Committee will be available to schmooze. This will be an informal opportunity to ask questions, share ideas, or simply to say hello.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 3<sup>RD</sup>

**8-8:45 AM ET / 3-3:45 PM ISRAEL**  
**SOCIAL TIME**

***Open Schmooze Room - Hospitality Room***

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**9-10:15 AM ET / 4-5:15 PM ISRAEL**  
**LIMMUD**

***Are vaccinations required by Jewish Law? (Hebrew)*** | RABBI DAVID GOLINKIN

What does Halakhah say about vaccinations and about people who refuse to get vaccinated?

***Theologies of Mitzvot*** | DR. WALTER HERZBERG

Exodus 12: The Israelites' Hasty Departure. Examine different theologies of mitzvot as reflected in the explanations of the commentaries.

***The CJLS' Ear to the Ground: Offering Non-Jews an Ark Opening*** | RABBI AMY LEVIN

The CJLS aspires to be responsive to challenges our colleagues grapple with in their communities. The teshuvah I wrote with our colleague, Josh Heller, "The Dissonance of a Non-Jew Opening the Aron Kodesh" began as a dissent. Shortly after its publication, we were asked to turn the dissent into a teshuvah. In our session, we will discuss the relative efficacy of dissents vis a vis teshuvot as well as the issue itself. Our breakout group time will provide an opportunity to "think out loud" about the issue and about the standing of non-Jews in our communities in general.

***Catastrophe to Hope: Five Voices of the Bible*** | RABBI HARVEY MEIROVICH

My session is a presentation of my book: Catastrophe to Hope: Five Voices of the Bible (2019). To read the Five Megillot in light of each other unveils a blueprint for gradual recovery. Lamentations and Ecclesiastes confront our languishing in pits of agony, Esther highlights the will to survive when confronting evil and lies. Restoring a measure of equilibrium opens the door to the Song of Songs belief that love is as fierce as death. The incremental process of recovery culminates with Ruth's transitioning from trauma to triumph. Hers is the conviction that resilience and hope are the 'vaccine-like' compounds that make recovery possible.

**Hitlamdut y Transformación, la práctica de Mussar** | RABBI JUDY NOWOMINSKI

Fuentes en ivrit o arameo de la literatura clásica judía (mas adelante puedo compartir el material).

**Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Hebrew Braille but Were Afraid to Ask** |

RABBI LAUREN TUCHMAN

This session will serve as both an overview of Braille as the tactile method of reading and writing used by the blind community, as well as a discussion of Hebrew Braille specifically. The goal of the session is to better equip our RA rabbis to educate their communities and themselves about Braille's usage and crucial importance in Jewish communal life.

**Becoming the Rabbi Emeritus - Moses and Joshua in Midrash Mishle ch. 14** | RABBI BURT VISOTZKY

In studying the text of the passing of Moses in Midrash Mishle 14, we will discuss issues with death, retirement, and the difference between them.

**10:30 - 11 AM ET / 7:30 - 8 AM PT / 5:30 - 6 PM ISRAEL**

**AZKARAH**

RABBI GERRY SKOLNIK AND RABBI JULIA ANDELMAN

**12 - 2 PM ET / 10 AM - 12 PM PT / 7 - 9 PM ISRAEL**

**PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES (SEE PAGE 11 FOR DETAILS)**

**2:30 - 3:30 PM ET / 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM PT / 9:30 - 10:30 PM ISRAEL**

**WHEN TECHNOLOGICAL DISRUPTION IS NOT DISRUPTIVE**

KEYNOTE: DANIEL SEPTIMUS

IN CONVERSATION WITH: RABBI ASHIRA KONIGSBURG

How does the democratization of information enhance our ability to foster sacred connections to Torah and community? My Jewish Learning and Sefaria have been at the forefront of connecting the curious with Jewish content. How does this access create an opening for people to take ownership of their Jewish journey? How does our role as rabbis shift when so much content is available on line? How can we use search data to guide our work? Join Daniel Septimus and Ashira Konigsburg as they explore the opportunities presented when we embrace new trends in Jewish engagement.

**4 - 5:15 PM ET / 1 - 2:15 PM PT**

**LIMMUD**

**How does the changing of the order of the first parashah of the Shema advance the agenda of the second parashah?** | RABBI REUVEN KIMELMAN

A debunking of the reward and punishment explanation for the second parashah of the Shema.

***“But Was She a Cushite?”: Rabbinic Sources on Blackness*** | RABBI GAIL LABOVITZ

Ibrahim X. Kendi has written (in *Stamped from the Beginning*), “All in all, ethnic and religious and color prejudice existed in the ancient world. Constructions of races...did not, and therefore racist ideas did not. But crucially the foundations of race and racist ideas were laid.” As participants in the cultural world of late antiquity, are the rabbis—or put perhaps more accurately in what ways might the rabbis be—implicated in this process? In this session, we will look at a variety of classical rabbinic texts in which rabbis consider skin color, ethnicity, physical differences. What, if any, are the implications for character, for social position, for value judgments?

***Ha Shomer Akhi Anochi? What God, Cain And Their Questions Can Teach Us*** | RABBI DAN ORNSTEIN

We rabbis are called upon constantly to help others make good moral, social and spiritual choices. One of our hardest, nearly impossible, challenges is to chachat mussar, lovingly but firmly critiquing people’s behaviors and the excuses that go with them. We’re in good company, as it were, with God, Who (lovingly but firmly?) confronted Cain when he murdered Abel and received Cain’s in/famous response: “Am I my brother’s keeper?” In this session, we’ll look at a few classical interpretations of God’s confrontation with Cain and his excuse making, as well as examine briefly how Judaism understands the imperative of Hoche-ach Tochiach. How can these traditions help us to be better rabbis and better, more morally resilient people?

***Cultivating Hope and Resilience - Lessons from the Rabbis*** | RABBI CHERYL PERETZ

As Jews, devotion to hope helps stave off despair. Yet, sometimes it feels like life’s challenges make it difficult to find the seeds of hope. In this session, we will look at rabbinic and hasidic texts on finding hope and using that hope as the seeds of resilience.

***Out of the Pit: Resilience in the Book of Genesis*** | DR. ORA HORN PROUSER

While many of our patriarchs and matriarchs suffered physically, emotionally, and spiritually, remarkably, we don’t see them ultimately wallowing in self pity and pain. We don’t see them acting as Jonah does at the end of the book bearing his name even though many of them suffered far more than he did. Why is that and how does it impact on our reading of the Book of Genesis? We will look at this phenomenon and analyze these biblical forbears as models for our own time.

***As Memories Fade: Yizkor and Historical Amnesia*** | DR. SHULY RUBIN SCHWARTZ

What is the source of our resilience as a people? Focusing together on the Six Remembrances that we recite at the end of weekday Shacharit, we’ll gain new insights into the role of memory in fortifying us as a people and lighting the way forward in challenging times.

***Mahloket Matters*** | RABBI MIKE URAM

We live in a moment where the breakdown in civil discourse affects nearly all areas of our lives. Judaism’s concept of mahloket provides a powerful tool to help us heal these divisions and foster a more healthy public discourse. The text sources for this session will come from the “Mahloket Matters” curriculum developed by Pardes Institute of Jewish studies with the help of experts in rabbinic Judaism and conflict resolution. Special emphasis will be given both to rich text study and ways to use these sources within the communities we lead.

7:30 - 8:30 PM ET / 4:30 - 5:30 PM PT

## SELF-CARE HOUR

### ***Pandemic Processing Pod: What has Sustained You?*** | RABBI AMY EILBERG

We explore the spiritual practices that have sustained us during these difficult times, and also the times when absolutely nothing helped!

### ***Niggun & Nourishment*** | RABBIS YOSEF GOLDMAN, BARRY DOV KATZ, ADAM KLIGFELD, ANNIE LEWIS, JOSH WARSHAWSKY, ARIEL ROOT WOLPE, and RABBI CANTOR HILLARY CHORNY

### ***Zokef K'fufim: A Moving Meditation with Makom Yoga*** | RABBI LAURIE MATZKIN

Whether you suffer from a bent spirit or hunched back (too much Zoom?!), this session will bring us from child's pose to a standing Mountain Pose and back again to resting. Learn a sequence of positions that will lift your posture both physically and spiritually and help you walk through your world with renewed gratitude, energy and presence. Gentle yoga is the goal of this session; all levels will benefit from this alignment-based experience that connects prayer and movement. Bring a yoga mat or clear floor space. Optional: yoga blocks and blanket.

### ***Origami for life! A great activity for your hands during Zoom calls*** | RABBI ADAM STEIN

Learn (or share) how to do some (not too difficult) origami like a bird, beautiful flower, ball, basket... and we'll try some Jewish themed origami as well! Supplies needed: Some origami paper that can be found online or at a store, or just any square paper!

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Ruderman Synagogue Inclusion Project ([www.cjp.org/rsip](http://www.cjp.org/rsip))

# 50 YEARS IN THE RABBINATE



## Reflections from the Class of 1970

*Warmest congratulations from the Rabbinical Assembly to our colleagues who have been rabbis and members of our RA for half a century. May you go from strength to strength ad meah v'esrim!*

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## **RABBI SHALOM BRONSTEIN**

My reflections span 16 years, 1970 the year I was ordained until Rosh Hodesh Tammuz 5746-July, 1986, when we came on Aliyah. At the end of my senior year, after some interviews for pulpits, I was offered two positions. One was the assistant rabbi of Shaarey Zedek in Buffalo whose senior rabbi was the legendary Isaac Klein. The other was a pulpit on my own as the rabbi of Agudath B'nai Israel in Lorain, Ohio, just west of Cleveland. Two of my teachers asked me what my plans were for the coming year. I told them and each provided me with a different recommendation. Professor Saul Lieberman told me that the possibility to be with Isaac Klein in the same shul was a unique opportunity. On the other hand, Dr. Simon Greenberg told me that starting out as the rabbi of my own shul was a challenge that he felt was best for me. We chose Buffalo and it was an astounding experience. Of course, politics complicated the situation and Rabbi Klein, ever the gentleman, carefully guided me during the four years we were in Buffalo. I also taught a course in Judaism at a local Catholic college. I served a new congregation in a suburb of Albany. There I had the good counsel of our colleague Rabbi Herman Kieval. During this time, I also taught at the day school in Albany. After our first year in Buffalo, I was contacted by the rabbi search committee of the synagogue in Lorain, Ohio asking me if I was available for their pulpit. I was not but they were in touch with me from then on. In 1977, the pulpit there was vacant and again they offered it to me. After completing the requirements of the RA for applying etc., I accepted and we moved to Lorain, Ohio, where I served 9 years until coming on Aliyah.

From my earliest years, I wanted to be a rabbi. I was deeply influenced by the rabbi of our congregation, Rabbi Morris Goodblatt, who was ordained by JTS in 1927. He spent his entire career as the rabbi of Congregation Beth Am Israel in Philadelphia. He came to Ohio with my parents in 1977 and installed me as the rabbi of Agudath B'nai Israel in Lorain. I was also greatly involved in the youth group LTF (Leaders Training Fellowship) during my high school and college years.

Changes in the Conservative Movement over the years since I served as a rabbi have not been to my satisfaction, so I am no longer as involved as I once was. I am still in contact with members of my last congregation so I must have had some influence. There are other stories of meeting people with whom I had contact many years earlier. They have related to how my suggestions and ideas influenced their lives. Rabbis should never underestimate the importance of their recommendations and the impact they have on the lives of others who come for advice.

## **RABBI BARRY CYTRON**

Two experiences, one immediately before our JTS ordination in 1970, the second from three years after, seem the most salient way to reflect on some of the more disquieting changes in American Jewish life over the past five decades.

My hometown rabbi, the illustrious Bernard Lipnick, invited me to serve as the congregation's intern for the 1969 summer, while he and the associate headed to summer retreat. His last words of

counsel went like this: “Barry, if you run into a serious halachic question, here’s Rabbi Eichenstein’s phone number. He’s a prominent orthodox scholar. Don’t hesitate to call him.”

The first Shabbat on duty, a member of the congregation asked to speak in private. “Rabbi,” he said, and even though I recall trying to demur from that designation, in retrospect perhaps I shouldn’t have. He was looking to the tradition as his wife was facing trauma and fear. “My wife has cancer; on Monday she’ll have a mastectomy. I remember learning something about Jewish respect for the body. What should she ask the surgeon to do with the removed tissue?”

No JTS course had prepared me for that moment. I promised to search out the proper response and call back. Motzei Shabbat I phoned that orthodox rabbi, introduced myself and asked for guidance. The next morning, having clarified the issue, he called back, thoughtfully guided me through the relevant sources, offering a resolution to the inquiry that allowed me to put that congregational family at ease.

Fast forward to the fall, 1973 and my first pulpit, Tifereth Israel in Des Moines, Iowa. It was the yontif of the Yom Kippur war. Two days into that fearful three weeks, the community leadership summoned a gathering late afternoon at the downtown business club. In a crowded room, one person after another stood to make a public pledge. I was still untested, inexperienced, and quite unworldly; the amounts undertaken by those present seemed unfathomable.

The next day, I was scheduled to have lunch in that same space with one of those individuals. “Lew,” I recall stammering. “Your words and promises were breathtaking.” What was really overwhelming, however, was his response. “What’s it all for? What we have is not just for our family now. It’s for our people!”

To me, those two stories speak profoundly of the shared assumptions that operated during those opening years of my rabbinate. There was a joint set of understandings governing American Jewish life. The tradition still mattered to the everyday congregant; Orthodox rabbis would still talk to a JTS student and future Conservative rabbi; an Iowa Jew raised in and devoted to that local community still understood that worldwide Jewry, especially in Israel, commanded his generosity.

The fissures in our nation’s social fabric are equally now mirrored within our small Jewish world. Once commonly held suppositions are under incessant siege. Today’s rabbi faces trials quite unlike those we first encountered. The tasks ahead, as Rabbi Tarfon knew all too well, merit our successors every skill and ounce of wisdom as they face ever growing challenges.

## **RABBI ELLIOT N. DORFF**

When Camp Ramah was showing me the deep meaning and sheer joy of being Jewish, I wandered into my public high school’s library and found one book on becoming a clergyman. It said that you had felt a “calling” to the profession. I have never really felt that. What I have felt – and what I have

seen in decades of rabbinical school admissions essays – is a deep love for God, Torah, and Israel and a desire to share that love and the meaningful and joyous life it produces with others. Fifty years in the rabbinate has certainly not disappointed me in that. If anything, because I have been blessed with helping to educate many other Jews who want to share that love as rabbis and educators, my love for God, Torah, and Israel has become ever broader and deeper. We are all lucky to have such fine people and devoted Jews in our ranks, and my trust in a flourishing future of our religion, people, and movement flows from knowing them.

Ever since first grade, when Miss Burke asked me to take Tom out to the hallway to teach him how to read, I have loved teaching. I tutored students in fifth and sixth grades; I began a tutoring program in junior high school; and I was President of Future Teachers of America in high school. So the fact that my rabbinate has focused on teaching is, at least in retrospect, not a surprise. Early on I realized that publishing was another way to teach both my students and people who would never be in my classes, and so that too has been a source of meaning and joy for me.

A career in the academy, though, was not always my intention. When I began thinking about the rabbinate, it was to be a Ramah director, for Ramah was central in making me the Jew I am. I did not do that, but spending sixteen years as Professor in Residence at Camp Ramah in California helped me live out at least some of that dream. While in rabbinical school the idea of becoming a congregational rabbi attracted me, and during my mid-40s I almost left the university to do that. Synagogue rabbis, after all, get to know people at all ages and be there for them in the many stages of life. In contrast, my students have been largely people in their teens and twenties, and although I have gotten to know many of them outside of class, it is the intellectual part of life that has been the center of our interactions. So as happy as I am that my career turned out as it did, in my next life I am going to be a congregational rabbi!

## **RABBI JEROME M. EPSTEIN**

My choice of a rabbinic career—next to that of marrying Jane—was the best decision in my life. The rabbinate permitted me to occupy myself daily with issues and concerns that have been and remain my life-long priorities.

I believe strongly in congregational life and through serving in pulpits and guiding synagogues in my role as CEO of the United Synagogue, I have witnessed congregations making an impact on people's lives. During these 50 years since ordination, I have observed many changes.

Although many congregations have gone through transformations, their importance to the future of Jewish living especially in the non-Orthodox world remains critical. When I entered rabbinical school, congregations were more formal than they are now, rabbis were often more distant (both due to both self-perception of their role and congregational expectations), and synagogue practice was much more structured around Halakha and mitzvot.

Congregations rarely called the rabbi by his first name (there were no female rabbis), the rabbi would often be found dressed in a robe while on the pulpit and was generally expected to give formal sermons. Today, the rabbi and congregation often seek to create a more informal and peer relationship. The sermon is often replaced by an informal d'var Torah, question and answer session, or dialogue between rabbi and congregation.

Decisions by the rabbi and congregation were usually instructed by Halakha and mitzvot as taught by our Seminary teachers or determined by the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards. In recent years, however, congregations' decisions for religious practice are frequently based upon other factors.

I am more convinced than ever that there is an important role for Conservative Judaism to play if we are willing to reassert our commitment to the mission of fostering Jewish living based on "Tradition and Change". This would require turning our attention to focus on the message and mission of Conservative Judaism. Conservative Jews must know what the vision of the Movement is for their lives. Thus, while accepting every Jew where s/he currently is, we must turn our attention to teaching and inspiring greater commitment to Jewish living.

From my travels to hundreds of congregations over the years, I have witnessed that large numbers of congregants do not understand what it should mean to be a Conservative Jew. For many, being a Conservative Jew is merely a commitment to pay dues to a Conservative synagogue. We have not yet succeeded in inspiring their commitment to grow towards the values that are a vital part of our mission.

I hope that we will be blessed with the willingness to always welcome Jews where they are as well as the willingness to set expectations for them so that as a consequence of our teaching, guiding and prodding they will strive to become "growing and fulfilled Jews".

### **RABBI WAYNE M. FRANKLIN**

When I entered the rabbinate 50 years ago, I could not imagine where my professional life would take me. I expected to teach and preach and share poignant moments in life with people in whatever congregation I might serve. I did that; it was an essential and gratifying aspect of my work. I was fortunate to serve three fine, very different congregations, in Benton Harbor, MI, Orange CT, and Providence, RI. But my career has ranged far beyond the walls of those institutions. As my own horizons expanded, I shared my broader awareness with members of my congregations, especially in Providence, where I served for 38 years, working with four generations of many families. I have enjoyed teaching, young people as well as teens and adults. In each congregation, I created a program for prospective converts to Judaism. That work was particularly satisfying, as graduates of those programs became active members of the Jewish community.

Freeing Soviet Jewry was a major focus of my early years in the pulpit, in sermons, rallies, and political activity. With three local friends, sponsored by our local Federation, I delivered Hebrew

materials to refuseniks once Hebrew study was permitted in the USSR. When a sizable group of Soviet emigres arrived in RI, several asked me to teach them what being Jewish meant. We studied many subjects and celebrated many Pesah Sedarim together.

Throughout my career, I have engaged in interfaith dialogue. I regularly met with a group of freshly minted clergy, like myself, in Benton Harbor. Those early connections helped me to appreciate the fundamental humanity and similarities across religious boundaries. Cherished friendships and trust developed. I experienced similar relationships in Connecticut. Those early experiences prepared me for still more profound connections in Providence.

Shortly after I arrived in Providence, I was introduced to Fr. Edward Flannery, who wrote *The Anguish of the Jews*, a pioneering study of Christian anti-Semitism. We organized a group rabbis and priests who met for dialogue for two decades.

A Protestant pastor and I created an annual statewide interfaith commemoration of Yom HaShoah, which has continued for more than 35 years, with support from leadership organizations in the Jewish and Christian communities.

The Episcopal Bishop of RI asked me to join him in creating an interfaith study and dialogue project called "The Abrahamic Accord," with the goal of eliminating anti-Semitism through interfaith understanding. Three nationally prominent theologians, Neil Gillman, Paul van Buren, and Anthony Saldarini guided our studies and discussions. Ten years ago, I was asked to represent the USCJ at the National Council of Synagogues, in dialogues with the US Conference of Catholic Bishops and the National Council of Churches. These opportunities have enriched my own religious attitudes and helped me build bridges of understanding, while affording me insights to share with my congregation.

In recent years, I traveled to Poland in missions sponsored by the Forum for Dialogue, whose goal is to eliminate anti-Semitism in the next generation of Poles. My latest adventure was spending two weeks in Nigeria, meeting and teaching native Igbos who have embraced Judaism. I feel incredibly blessed to have had such wide-ranging, rewarding experiences throughout my career.

### **RABBI PAUL FREEDMAN**

Surely the greatest of all blessings is to see those one has been privileged to guide in the past of Judaism, guide others in their turn.

By way of background, first USY Chapter President, first Regional USY President, Connecticut Valley Region USY and first International President, 1952-1954 under the tutelage of Dr. Morton Siegel, z"l, first Director, Department of Youth Activities, my mentor and teacher.

My gratitude to HaShem for anything that I have been enabled to do over the years before and during the Rabbinate.

After spending two years, 1958-1960, in Israel following our marriage, Nina, my bride and helpmate in countless ways in everything that I cite below and much more, returned to the States where I assumed the position of Assistant Director, Department of Youth Activities,USCJ.

In late 1965, I turned for advice to Rabbi Neil Gilman, z"l. At his suggestion I met with Dr. Simon Greenberg, z"l. Not only did he encourage and support me but he took me across the hall to my then boss, Rabbi Bernard Segal, z"l and said, "Bernard, Paul wants to enter the Rabbinical School and we are going to make it happen". As Rabbi Segal was hearing this for the first time,it was "interesting."

The class of 1966 was amazing. To this day, in my study/office in our "private miracle", 59 King George in Jerusalem, I see the photo of our graduating class!

Dr. Greenberg enabled us to rent an apartment in Morningside Gardens immediately joining the Seminary.

Following ordination I continued to direct the Youth Department until our Aliyah in 1991. I was able to reach out to my teachers and fellow students who were now my colleagues. As I dealt with the multitude of challenges involved in my work, I was able to address issues in a very different and more effective fashion. Over the years, involving religious and administrative problems and solutions, I was and remain grateful for the friendship and understanding which smoothed my path.

I was and remain grateful for the friendship and understanding from my colleagues, whether we agreed or disagreed. These relationships opened many new doors—many of which may not have opened, had I not been a fellow Rabbi.

My greatest joy, together of course with my joy in our family, has been the love I have received and continue to receive from those with whom we have shared the path of Conservative Judaism as taught by my teachers.

In 1960 Dr. Morton Siegel put Nina and me on a bus with the words: "go start a college organization". Atid, the precursor to Koach, was born, and produced many of the future leaders of our Movement.

USY continued to grow and flourish to a high point of 22,000 plus members, including Kadima.

Nativ, beginning with twelve participants 40 years ago, regardless of the incredulity of some, continues to this day when they can boast in spite of the pandemic a highly successful gap year in Israel.

One of the achievements of USY on Wheels serving as the feeder for USY Israel Pilgrimage, was that it taught our youth observance of Kashruth, no matter where they live. While Israel Pilgrimage in its turn has served as a feeder operation for Nativ and instilled a love of Israel in thousands of young Conservative Jews.

In 1978, in cooperation with the Jewish Agency, USY launched our Shlichut Program, adopting the Jerusalem Platform at an International USY Convention, and bringing our first Shaliach, Yitzchak Jacobsen to the Departmental staff, to be followed by many more around the country.

Rabbi Jacob Blumenthal, currently directing both our RA and USCJ was motivated by his summer as a USY Israel Pilgrim. I rest my case.

I firmly believe his leadership will make a significant difference in the future of our movement. It already has.

Dr. Morton Siegel, z"l, introduced me to the joys of Shabbat by inviting me to his home. How blessed Nina and I are to continue to share our Shabbatot, first at 322 West 72nd Street, New York City and now 59 King George, Jerusalem, Israel.

Our deep gratitude to the Almighty.

### **RABBI STEVEN M. GLAZER**

I want to begin by congratulating my classmates and thanking the RA for honoring us.

Since becoming emeritus in 2013 after 43 years in the pulpit, I have been working in the field of bioethics. I am currently on the faculties of three medical schools, Georgetown, George Washington, and The Uniformed Services University. In addition, I serve on the Intramural Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the National Institutes of Health, the Maryland Governor's Advisory Council for Quality of Care at the End of Life, and the Ethics Committee at Inova Fairfax Hospital, the largest hospital in the DC area. As I like to tell friends, "I'm not retired, just reinvented"! And, yes, I do know Tony Fauci!!

Although I deal with biomedical ethics in general, my rabbinic training is never far from the surface, as I almost always think halachically about the complex issues under examination. From time to time, I even regale my medical and scientific colleagues with halachic excursions!

### **MAYER I. GRUBER**

I was raised as the son of a Reform rabbi and rebbetzin, and I thought that I knew better. So I decided to be a Conservative rabbi. I found all the teachers at JTS totally exciting. At the end of the first year I persuaded the administration to let me take extra courses in Bible and enroll for graduate studies in Ancient Semitic Languages & Cultures at Columbia University. Max Arzt, of blessed memory, arranged for me to serve for two years (1970-1972) as Assistant Rabbi at Oheb Shalom Congregation in South Orange, New Jersey, so that I could complete my graduate studies at Columbia. At Oheb Shalom I learned by example from the outstanding Conservative rabbi, Louis M. Levitsky, the gifted Cantor Edgar Mills, and the talented educator, Morris Samber, all of blessed memory. I enjoyed the

collegiality of the many Conservative rabbis in the vicinity. I enjoyed teaching and counseling the elderly, the youth, and everyone in between. I still believed that my mission was to pass along facts of Jewish history (like Chaim Potok in his early novels) and get more people to buy a lulav and build a sukkah. I now believe that my job in life is to cultivate a listening heart. After two years in New Jersey, my classmate Byron L. Sherwin, of blessed memory, arranged for me a job teaching Bible, Talmud, Midrash and ancient Semitic languages at Spertus College of Judaica in Chicago. I worked there with great joy from 1972 to 1980. In 1976 I realized I could not make a living teaching at Spertus, and Rabbi Solomon Zaiman, of blessed memory (father of RA colleague Joel Zaiman, of blessed memory) arranged for me to succeed him as rabbi of Mikdosh El Hagro Hebrew Centre in Evanston, and I enjoyed again working with youth, elderly, and everyone in between, while continuing to teach at Spertus, until Rabbi Professor Moshe Greenberg, of blessed memory, arranged for me an academic position at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Beer Sheva where I arrived in July 1980. I retired in 2013. In Beer Sheva there were repeated opportunities for me to accept the position of Rabbi at Eshel Avraham Congregation, and each time with no regrets I turned them down. I continue to enjoy writing books, articles and book reviews, evaluating books, articles, theses and dissertations. What has kept me healthy physically and mentally was not to take myself too seriously, but to take my work seriously, and to spend time with kind and interesting people, especially my two best friends, my late wife, Judith Friedman Gruber (1948-1993), and my wife of now 6 years, Judith Weissman Cohen. I also enjoy hearing from classmates and rabbinic colleagues and travelling to faraway places with strange-sounding names.

## **JAMES MARK LEBEAU**

The variety of experiences during my rabbinate has contributed to my sense of fulfillment and satisfaction. It has been the interaction with interesting people and communities that fashions my memories.

When I entered JTS, rabbinical students committed to serve in either the chaplaincy or hardship congregations after ordination. The RA relaxed this obligation because of objections to U.S. involvement in the Viet Nam War. Rabbi Heschel urged me to honor my promise to become a chaplain because Jewish personnel needed rabbinical guidance. My two years as a Marine Corps chaplain in the U.S. Navy immediately following ordination, allowed me to provide programs for Jewish personnel and to assist non-Jewish soldiers as well. I valued the opportunity to share interfaith activities.

I was motivated to study for the rabbinate because I wanted to be a pulpit rabbi. I imagined myself spending my entire career in one congregation and becoming an integral part of the lives of my members. As the rabbi of Temple Beth El in Lowell, Massachusetts, I achieved this goal as well as becoming active in and helping to strengthen the Conservative Movement. I served as President of the New England RA and Chairman of the USCJ Youth Commission. My wife, Marcia and I led one USY-On-Wheels trip and five USY Israel Pilgrimages. I left the congregational rabbinate after 13 years to make aliyah.

My early years in Israel were typical of many who made aliyah. I worked at six part-time jobs to make ends meet. Eventually, Rabbi Reuven Hammer asked me to coordinate the Year-in-Israel program for North and South American rabbinical students at the institution then known as Neve Schechter. Rabbi Shamma Friedman also asked me to administer the Saul Lieberman Institute of Talmudic Research. It is interesting to note that I held these positions at Neve Schechter because as an 18-year-old USY International President, I dedicated this building in 1960, and in 1981, our USY Pilgrimage group was based there. My greatest satisfaction was working with our rabbinical students in Israel. I still maintain the relationships I formed during my six years of work at Neve Schechter.

In 1993 I became the Rabbi of the Jewish Community Center of Japan, a position I enjoyed for four years. As a Conservative rabbi, I was able to provide for all streams of Jewish practice: for those who were in Japan to work, for those who made Japan their home, and for tourists.

In 1997, I returned to Jerusalem to be the Director of the USCJ Fuchsberg Center. I worked with a dedicated staff to program for youth, adults, and USCJ congregations visiting Israel. I was particularly proud of the growth of our Conservative Yeshiva and the expansion of the campus.

Since retirement in 2010, I volunteer for a variety of projects. Marcia and I traveled extensively until the pandemic restricted us. Friendships strengthen us during this difficult time. Our closest friends remain those with whom we shared our years at JTS.

## **RABBI JONATHAN PORATH**

Somehow saying “half a century” seems so much more august and weighty than 50 years, but in reality, I have been part of the “rabbinate” for much longer. My father Rabbi Tzvi H. Porath, and both of my Zadies, Rabbi Israel Porath and Rabbi S. I. Levin, kulam aleihem hashalom, were pulpit rabbis in their own respective communities in Chevy Chase, Cleveland and Minneapolis respectively, for far longer than 50 years, so becoming a rabbi initially seemed rather familiar and also “expected” [though I wasn’t quite aware of it when I was finishing up Brandeis in 1966 and trying to decide what to do next; maybe law? maybe a professor of Russian history?]. I guess the rabbinate just seemed to fit.

And indeed it has.

I look at the wall above my desk in Yerushalayim and see the two documents I have framed, my JTS ordination as “Chacham Yitkarei ve’Rabi Yitkarei” from 1970, and my father’s semicha from Rabbi Chayim Rubenstein from Chicago from 1939.

I naturally assumed that I would be spending my entire life in the pulpit, and I spent nine wonderful years in Temple Beth Ohr in Clark, NJ, but we decided that the call of Aliyah was stronger than staying in America, and so, in 1984, my wife Deena and I, together with our then 4 children [which was to grow to five plus eight grandchildren] came to Yerushalayim.

I recall the RA convention before I left, some 37 years ago, when the chevra said to me: “Yasher koach and kol hakavod, Jonathan, for making Aliyah!”

My response really should have been: “Yasher koach and kol hakavod to you guys, for staying behind!!”

We have never regretted our decision.

After the initial period of getting settled, seven part-time jobs, and working with an American college program, I refound my true calling, and returned to the rabbinate, but this time not in shul, or in Hillel, or in an organization, but in the special and unique world of Israel.

When the Russians began to arrive in 1989, some neighbors and I set up in our Ramot community a “Keren Klitat Aliya” which absorbed hundreds and hundreds of newly arriving Soviet Jews.

All of the rabbinical skills I had seen from my family, and learned at the Seminary, came into play, as we arranged Friday night Ongei Shabbat, holiday services, classes, and all that we could.

It was so pure and holy [“mamash” as Reb Shlomo Carlebach would have said]. Once, on a Friday evening I was speaking about kashrut, and asked quite spontaneously at the conclusion: “Who would like to keep kosher?”—something I never phrased quite that way in America—and 20 hands shot up!!! The following week, one of our dear community ladies, Regina by name, led a crew of young neighborhood Habadniks, who kashered the homes.

I could do mitzvot “wholesale”!

The spiritual high for me was scheduling, on Yom Kippur, a “Pominalnaya Malitva/Yizkor Service” for the Russians in our neighborhood. During the afternoon break, hundreds flocked to shul, dressed in white, many wearing tennis shoes. After saying Avinu Malkeinu and Al Chet in Russian, I led them in a Tefillat Yizkor, which I had composed, “for all of the Jews of the Soviet Union, who had died while serving in the Red Army or in the Partisans, or in Stalin’s GULAG, or who passed away before they could come to Eretz Yisrael.”

We concluded with Kaddish Yatom, which they repeated after me, word by word by word, ever so slowly. It was their very first time participating with the rest of the Jews of the world on this holy day.

I continued for fifteen fulfilling years in the Russian Department of the JDC, commuting from Israel to Russia, once a month over that time, more than 175 visits to the Jews of Russia.

My most current rabbinate is as one of the lay leaders of our local zoominyan. We daven on line three times a day, serving men and women, from all over the country, from Haifa, Tel Aviv, Efrat, Ashkelon, as well as Jerusalem.

And I do what we all know best: greet people when they come online, ask how they are doing, say a Me Shebeirch for the sick, especially in these perilous times, make an El Maleh Rachamim, and make the concluding announcements [Mincha b'echad v'esrim; Maariv b'sheva. Kulam muzmanim! Yom tov lekulam!].

I got my calling from my father z"l and my family, my foundational learning from the Seminary, where I was privileged to study at the feet of Gedolei Hador, and was fortunate to be able to fashion a career in a different rabbinate than I knew would exist growing up. Who would ever have imagined davening on Yom Kippur with Soviet Jews or kashering homes for olim chadashim in Yerushalayim or serving as a gabbai on zoom during a pandemic.

I revel in our milestone and will all our friends and colleagues many more fruitful years to come, in whatever future challenges the Kadosh Baruch Hu has in mind for us.

### **RABBI HERBERT N. SCHWARTZ**

Synagogue life had become more open to the general community by the time I entered it as a newly ordained Rabbi.

The synagogue was still a place to come to be nurtured and restored. However, over time, Rabbis ventured increasingly outside the confines of the synagogue for other than ritual matters.

We were invited to take on corporate responsibilities outside of the Jewish community by the general community.

I focused on health care. "Health care", too, expanded to include gun control, needle exchange, and even Homelessness. The work was almost always at the corporate level.

Today, more people are encouraged to venture out beyond the confines of the synagogue to do "good work".

Today, we recognize that our own people need to become better acquainted with Jewish texts to ensure their work has a Jewish stamp. We have yet to recognize and support the good work that people are doing in their homes and in their daily lives. That's next.

### **RABBI EDMUND WINTER**

In order to mark the high point of the presentation of the Ordination diplomas by Chancellor Dr. Louis Finkelstein; he recited a Biblical verse and each one of us responded by reciting a Biblical verse of our choosing.

When I received my ordination certificate Dr. Finkelstein recited a verse from Psalms 121:8: The Lord will guard your going and coming now and forever.

I responded in the presence of the Holy Ark with the words from Psalms 19:8: The teaching of the Lord is perfect, renewing life; the decrees of the Lord are enduring, making the simple wise.

Over the years I have made it a practice to recite both of those verses from the Psalms which has centered me especially during difficult and challenging times.

I believe that the sentiments of those verses: God's providence during my lifetime and my deep commitment to Jewish learning have given me the resilience and the courage to continue my chosen path as Rabbi, Teacher, and Preacher of Israel.

I thank the Almighty God and my Seminary teachers for enabling me to reach this important accomplishment in my life.

### **RABBI HERBERT YOSKOWITZ, MA, MHL, DD (HON) JTS CLASS OF 1970**

Life transitions provide the opportunity to reflect on the past and contemplate the future. Now, I pause to look back on the fifty years since my 1970 ordination even as I look forward to the future.

Reflecting on these years of my rabbinate is like reflecting on a long marriage. There are myriad memorable moments, many highlights, a great deal of fulfillment and some disappointments. These moments fill me with a deep sense of gratitude for the gift of my rabbinate and for the blessing of having served as a "teacher and preacher in Israel", a Rav to so many: "Tov l'hodot La' Shem."

In expressing gratitude, my abundance of thankfulness can be grouped. I am grateful for the presence in my life of three rabbinic mentors whose influence continues to this day. Rabbi Norman Frimer, z"l, Hillel Director at Brooklyn College, inspired me to enter this profession. Chancellor Louis Finkelstein, z"l, my greatest teacher at JTS, modeled rabbinic leadership in interfaith relations. He continued our correspondence after my ordination and encouraged my interfaith efforts as an Army Chaplain. These efforts became the model interfaith program for the US Fifth Army. I honor his wisdom and treasure his correspondence. Rabbi Jacob B. Agus, z"l, the most scholarly pulpit rabbi of his day, taught me that a successful pulpit rabbi should have a specialty beyond rabbinics. His guidance inspired me to pursue graduate courses in history and a Bush Leadership Fellowship in bioethics (in Minnesota, at Georgetown and at St. Bart's Hospital, London.) I am very grateful for his presence in my life and regard him as a second father.

I am ever thankful for having had the gift of teaching Judaism to congregants of all ages, to community members and to interfaith forums. It has been a privilege and a joy to have had the

opportunity of sharing Torah; helping parents guide their children in the ways of Torah; teaching the importance of keeping our traditions and loving Israel. I will long remember the satisfaction derived from leading congregational trips to Israel and to Jewish communities of the world going on site to study our heritage. I hope that my teaching had a positive influence on many.

I am thankful beyond words for having had the opportunity to be with people at moments of life passages. Whether called upon to share in times of joy or sorrow, happiness or disappointment, it was a privilege to be part of these life cycle events. Whether to increase the joy of a simcha or to lessen the trauma of loss, the unique rabbinic role in these sacred moments was always meaningful. To me, this significant pastoral role is most important as it signifies the personal connection between a rabbi and his congregants. This connection, hearing the pain of loss expressed by congregants, was the impetus for *The Kaddish Minyan: From Pain to Healing, Twenty Personal Stories*. I am thankful to have compiled and edited this book which brought comfort to people in Detroit and nationally. I am thankful to have been the enabler who shared these words that taught the Jewish way of mourning and of menachem avelim to help others heal from loss.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge that I am abundantly and ever thankful for the love, devotion and support of my dear wife, a true ezer k'negdo, and our children. They encouraged and enabled my rabbinate. They understood when I was home less frequently than they or I would have liked as I served the congregation and community.

How thankful I am that as an Emeritus I continue to teach Jewish values and ethics, applying my graduate education and experience, to educate the next generation of physicians in bioethics. It has been a fulfilling rabbinic run. I give thanks, most of all to G-d, for enabling me to teach and model Jewish life these fifty years. I am immeasurably thankful. *Tov l'hodot La'Shem*.



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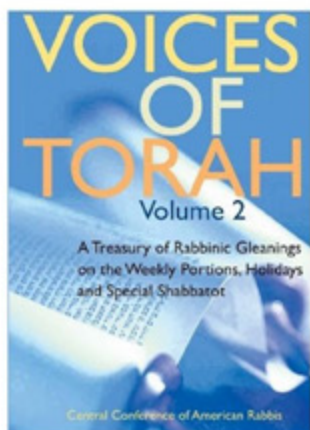
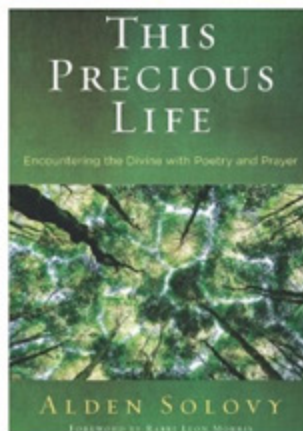
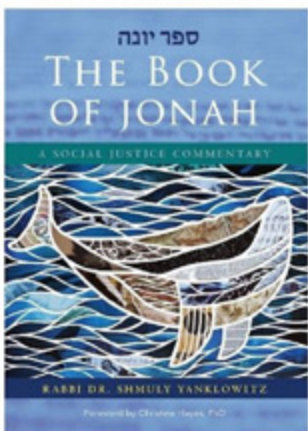
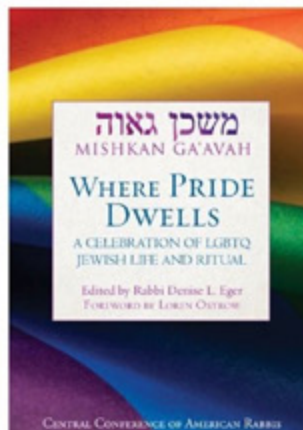
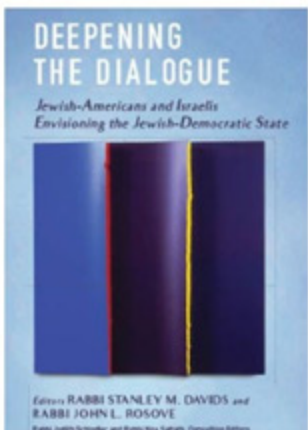
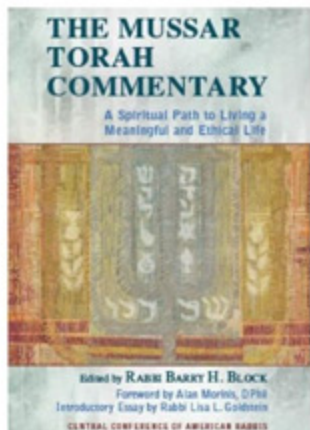
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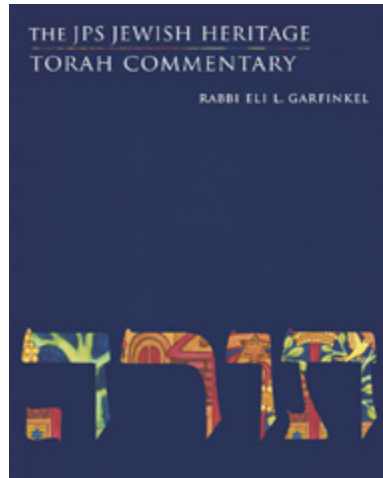
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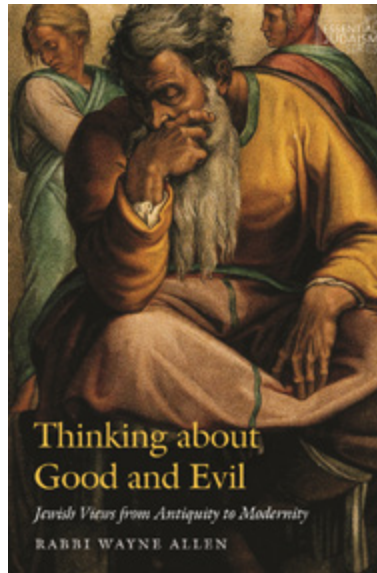


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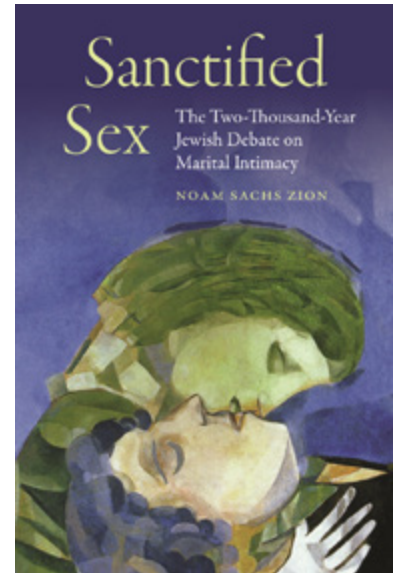
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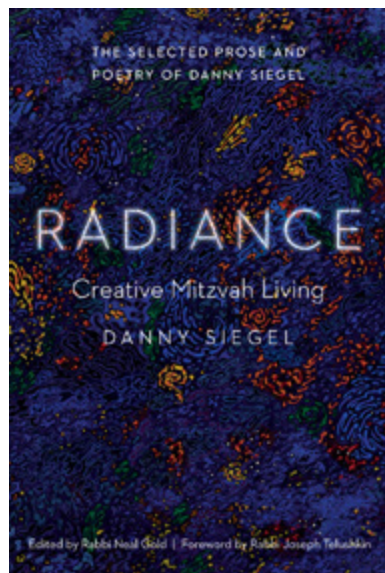


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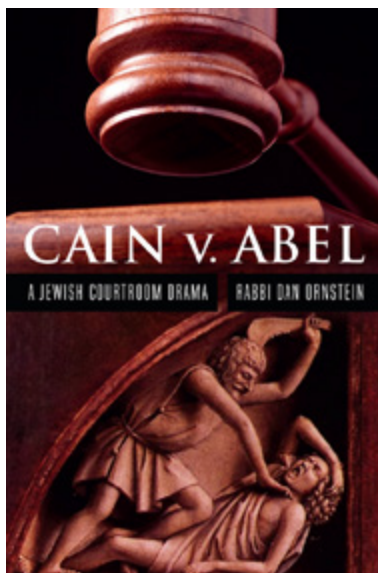
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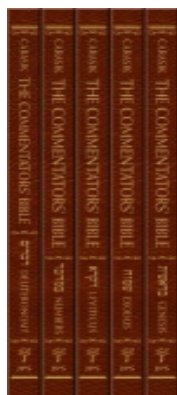
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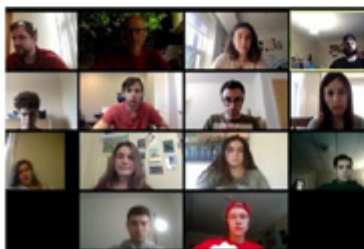
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