

J Learn **Find Your Jewish Voice...Enter the**
for learning's sake. **Conversation!**

Course Descriptions and Faculty Bios – Spring 2008

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A Journey Through the Garden of Kaballah

Delve into the world of Kaballah. Get hands-on experience with kabalistic texts and mystical references and personalities. Participants discover kaballah's hidden light and how it influences our sacred texts, rituals and prayer. Join us in learning how to lead a more meaningful and spiritual life. Course fee \$45.

Commack Jewish Center, 83 Shirley Court, Commack, NY
Sunday mornings March 30 and April 13, 9:30 – 11:15 am
Wednesday evening April 9, 7:30 pm – 9:15 pm
[Rabbi Abraham Rabinowich](#)

Temple Beth-El, 660 Park Avenue, Huntington, NY
Thursdays 7:30 pm – 9:15 pm, 3 weeks beginning March 27th
[Rabbi Abraham Rabinowich](#)

Great Minds Don't Think Alike

This course combines biography, history, and philosophy in a survey of the lives and works of many of Judaism's seminal thinkers. Our discussion includes Maimonides, Israel Ba'al Shem Tov, Moses Mendelsohn, Samson Raphael Hirsch, Theodore Herzl, Mordecai Kaplan, AJ Heschel, Eliezer Berkowitz, Rachel Adler and Zalman Shachter-Shelomi. Survey this historical array of significant Jewish movers and shakers, defining how their insights have crafted Jewish thought and contemporary wisdom. This course explores the motivation of principle philosophers and theologians. What prompted them to challenge the status quo of their society? We will evaluate their influences and consider their impact on Judaism as we know it today. Course fee: \$120 including materials.

Congregation Sons of Israel, 111 Irving Place, Woodmere
Sunday mornings, 9:30 am – 11:30 am, 8 weeks beginning March 9th
[Rabbi Arnold Samlan](#)

Improve Your IQ: Israel Literacy

Improve your Israel literacy quotient. Israel is a Jewish democratic state. How is it Jewish? How is it democratic? How do these two parts of its identity combine? What are the main groups in Israel, and how do they get along? What is the real basis of the Arab-Israel conflict (regardless of your position on how Israel should deal with it)? Whatever happened to the kibbutzim? What is Zionism, and does it still have a function? These questions — important to Israel and the Jews — will be examined in this mini-course. Course fee: \$120.

Sid Jacobson JCC, 300 Forest Drive, East Hills

Thursday Evenings, 7:30 pm – 9:15 pm, 8 weeks beginning February 28th

[Dr. Mervin Verbit](#)

Temple Isaiah, 1404 Stony Brook Rd., Stony Brook, NY

Tuesday evenings, 7:30 pm – 9:30 pm, 8 weeks beginning February 26th

[Dr. Mervin Verbit](#)

Melton I -Purposes of Jewish Living

The Florence Melton Adult Mini-School, a project of Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Explore essential theological concepts as they unfold in Torah, Talmud, and other sacred texts.

- Look at the “big questions” in Judaism, such as God, sin, miracles, what happens after we die, and why people suffer.
- Is the Torah the revealed word of God?
- What is the status and role of women in Judaism?
- What is prayer?
- What are the meaning and purpose of Mitzvot?
- What is the Religious Significance of the State of Israel?

Course fee: \$300 plus \$60 for Melton binder with complete materials. Total fee is \$360.

Midway Jewish Center, 330 So. Oyster Bay Road, Syosset, NY

Tuesday mornings, 9:30 am – 11:30 am, 15 weeks beginning February 5th

[Rabbi Steven Moskowitz](#)

Reconstructionist Congregation Beth Emeth, 36 Franklin Ave, Hewlett, NY

Thursday evenings, 7:30 pm – 9:30 pm, 15 weeks beginning February 14th

[Rabbi Michael Stanger](#)

Temple Beth David, 100 Hauppauge Rd., Commack, NY

Thursday evenings, 7:30 pm – 9:30 pm, 15 weeks beginning February 7th

[Rabbi David Kalb](#)

Shivim Panim: The Seventy Faces of Wisdom Bereshit I: From Adam to Abraham, The First Twenty Generations

Florence Melton Adult Mini-School Scholars Curriculum, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Take a look at some of the world's oldest and most profound stories! Find meaning in how they impact today's society and influence your life. Jewish tradition suggests that the Torah has "70 faces" or ways of interpreting and understanding it. This course features a multi-faceted approach to the study of the book of Genesis. You'll find stories of war and peace, family feuds, battles for revenge and power and passion, romance and legal wrangling. Revisit the texts you learned as a child with increased understanding as an adult and Jewish parent. Materials include interpretations by artists, poets and modern scholars. It's not rated PG and it's not for kids. Course fee \$120 plus additional \$30 for Melton binder with complete materials. Total fee is \$150.

Hewlett-East Rockaway Jewish Centre, 295 Main St., East Rockaway, NY
Thursday evenings, 7:30 pm – 9:30 pm, 8 weeks beginning February 28th
[Rabbi Arnold Samlan](#)

Merrick Jewish Centre, 225 Fox Blvd, Merrick, NY
Sunday mornings, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm, 8 weeks beginning March 2nd
[E. Joseph Septimus](#)

Midway Jewish Center, 330 So. Oyster Bay Road, Syosset, NY
Tuesday mornings, 9:30 am – 11:30 am, 8 weeks beginning February 26th
[E. Joseph Septimus](#)

Torah Yoga

The ancient practice of yoga uses breath and movement to enlighten body, mind, heart, and soul. Torah Yoga offers an experience of Jewish wisdom through classic yoga instruction, coupled with the study of traditional and mystical Jewish texts. The Torah Yoga approach encourages the student to learn and grow holistically. The meditative aspects of yoga help the student reach a deeper, more spiritual satisfying place in their life. Students acquire wisdom that inspires and guides by studying with the whole self. Take a journey toward health, vitality and peace while connecting more deeply with the hidden essence of Torah - the Divine. Methodology is influenced by the insights of Torah Yoga creator, Diane Bloomfield.

Merrick Jewish Centre, 225 Fox Blvd, Merrick

Wednesday mornings, 9:30 am – 11:15 am, 8 weeks beginning February 27th

Course fee \$120

[Andrew Kahn](#)

Temple Israel of Great Neck, 108 Old Mill Road, Great Neck

Tuesday evenings, 7:30 pm – 9:15 pm, 10 weeks beginning February 5th

Course fee \$150

[Andrew Kahn](#)

Temple Sinai, 425 Roslyn Rd, Roslyn Heights

Tuesday mornings, 9:30 am – 11:15 am, 8 weeks beginning February 26th

Course fee \$120

[Andrew Kahn](#)

2007 – 2008 Friends of J Learn Lunch ‘n’ Learn Forging a Jewish Nation: Samuel, Saul, and David

This is a text study of the books Samuel I and II discussing prophecy, judgeship, government, and the formation of disparate tribes into a nation. We will be reading from the books of Samuel in conjunction with Chronicles and other books of the Bible. We will also be looking at the world outside Israel – what was going on and who was doing it.

This course is a brown bag Lunch ‘n’ Learn, *free of charge* for Members of Friends of J Learn. (Nominal material fee of \$10 for all participants.)

Course fee: \$130 for non-members (\$120 tuition plus \$10 materials fee).

UJA– Federation of New York, 6900 Jericho Turnpike, Suite 302, Syosset, NY

Tuesdays 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm, second semester – 8 classes beginning February 12

[Ann Elbirt](#)

Friends of J Learn

A Friend of J Learn is a current student or an alumnus who is committed to supporting Jewish education.

Become a Friend of J Learn! Choose your level of membership.

- Chaver* (Friend) \$36
- Yedid* (Dear Friend) \$72
- Tomech* (Supporter) \$180
- Parnas* (Benefactor) \$360

Shalom Hartman Institute: Foundation Narratives of Jewish Life

Shalom Hartman Institute

Participate in a Virtual Beit Midrash! Live from Jerusalem - through state-of-the-art technology, experience simultaneous study with the scholars from the Shalom Hartman Institute. Join together with an international community of learners in a virtual classroom. Learn from the greatest thinkers in modern Jewish life, among them Rabbis David and Donniel Hartman.

This year's series focuses on Judaism's Central narratives. What does it mean when we say that God created the world? How do we square science and religion? Can we believe that God wrote the Torah while disagreeing with some of its commandments? What are the implications of our retelling the exodus from Egypt in so many of our prayers and what does this say about our concept of tikkun olam? Delve into relevant thematic study, supplemented by contemporary voices and sacred texts. Join us for the exciting learning opportunity. Course fee: \$450 for series (\$700 for couple).

The Darby Group, 300 Jericho Quadrangle, Jericho, NY 11590

Sunday mornings, 9:15 – 11:45 am, once monthly, beginning October 21, 2007

[Rabbi Steven Moskowitz](#)

For more information, contact Beverly Wachtel, J Learn Assistant Director at 516.677.1830

J Learn for Clergy: Rabbinic Narratives during the time of the Talmud

Me'ab

Participate in a high level interdenominational initiative that invites you to engage in sophisticated, text-based study. The Talmud, Midrash and other rabbinic works contain hundreds of stories recounting the lives and deeds of our rabbinic sages. Traditional Jewish teaching features tales of Hillel, Akiba, Shimon bar Yohai, as well as other Talmudic greats. Current scholarship now questions the historicity and biographic reliability of these sources. Are they better characterized as didactic fiction, studied through the lens of literary analysis? This class explores the shift in this scholarly approach. Course fee \$275. (*Additional choveret fee not included*). **For more information, contact Beverly Wachtel, J Learn Assistant Director at 516.677.1830**

UJA-Federation of New York, 6900 Jericho Turnpike, Suite 302, Syosset
Tuesday mornings, 10:30 am – 12:30 pm, once monthly, beginning October 16, 2007

[Rabbi Jeffrey Rubenstein, PhD.](#)

Rabbi Ronald Androphy earned his bachelor's degree magna cum laude from Brandeis University where he majored in economics. He received his M.A. and rabbinic ordination from Jewish Theological Seminary. He has been the rabbi of East Meadow Jewish Center for over 20 years. Rabbi Androphy is a past president of the Rabbinical Assembly of Nassau-Suffolk (and currently serves as its Av Bet Din (chief judge of conversion court), the Long Island Board of Rabbis, and the Rabbinic Advisory Committee of the UJA-Federation of Long Island. Rabbi Androphy is studying for a doctorate (D.H.L.) in Bible and Ancient Semitic Languages at JTS, and he will be studying at Harvard University in Spring of 2008 as the recipient of the Daniel Jeremy Silver Fellowship.

Rabbi Moses A. Birnbaum is the spiritual leader of the Plainview Jewish Center. He previously served as associate executive vice president of the New York Board of Rabbis, as a pulpit rabbi in Massachusetts, and as a Hillel director at Rutgers University. Rabbi Birnbaum is immediate past president of the Long Island Board of Rabbis, an officer of the New York Board of Rabbis and board member of the Long Island Chapter, American Jewish Committee. Rabbi Birnbaum is a graduate of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, which awarded him an honorary doctorate in 1999. He holds a Master of Arts in Jewish communal service from Brandeis University, a Doctor of Divinity degree from the Jewish Theological Seminary and a Bachelor of Arts from Queens College.

Ann Elbirt is engaged in long term study at Drisha Institute for Jewish Education in the study of Parshanut (Biblical Exegesis). She also currently teaches an adult text study class on the Biblical books of Joshua and Judges. Ann has taught at Rambam Yeshiva, Temple Beth Shalom and Temple Israel in Massachusetts, and is an instructor of Computer Literacy and specific software programs at a technical school located in Hauppauge. Ann is a long-term teacher of Long Island's Women's Study class.

David Flatto writes and lectures on Maimonides, Jewish legal philosophy, and the critical and historical study of rabbinics. He is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University. His research focuses on the interdisciplinary fields of law and Jewish studies, specializing in rabbinic jurisprudence. Flatto received a B.A. degree from Yeshiva University, a J.D. from Columbia University School of Law in 1997 and ordination from Yeshiva University. This is his fourth year on the Me'ah faculty.

Dorit Gryn received her BA from Wingate College in Israel. Ms. Gryn has taught Hebrew language and literature to hundreds of adults, throughout Long Island. She serves as an adjunct faculty professor at Nassau Community College and Hofstra University. She also teaches Hebrew in the language department of Great Neck High School.

Rabbi Andrew Hahn, Ph.D. earned a PhD in Jewish Philosophy at the Jewish Theological Seminary, focusing on medieval thought and creation theology. He received his rabbinic ordination from the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Rabbi Hahn has lectured widely in adult Jewish education. He has taught courses of his own design at JTS, NYU, and Franklin & Marshall College, and at the Academy of Jewish Religion among other venues. Rabbi Hahn is resident at CLAL, the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership.

Rabbi Jill Hammer, Ph.D. is the Director of Spiritual Education at the Academy for Jewish Religion. She is also the director of Tel Shemesh, a website and community celebrating Jewish traditions connected with the earth (www.telshemesh.org). Rabbi Hammer is the author of two books, and her poems, stories, and essays have been published

in many journals, newspapers, and anthologies. Rabbi Hammer has collaborated with CLAL, Nehirim, StorahTelling, the HUC Kollel, and other Jewish organizations.

Rabbi David Kalb is a Rabbi Without Borders. A true pluralist, he is interested in working and learning with the entire Jewish Community. Not one to just "talk the talk," he puts himself on the line, re-vitalizing Jewish life in the process. He brings a new level of awareness to Jewish identity, linking tradition with modern experience. Well-versed in Jewish texts and contemporary sources, Rabbi Kalb approaches scholarship as a living part of Jewish experience. His goal is to bring Judaism into all aspects of life and he believes that Judaism has to operate in the real world, not just the Synagogue. To him Judaism must be a holistic experience, playing itself out not only in prayer, ritual, ethics and philosophy but in art, music, literature, athletics and every other aspect of life..

Andrew Kahn is certified by the Yoga Alliance as an ERYT (Experienced Registered Yoga Teacher.) Mr. Kahn has extensive training in Yoga from the Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health in Massachusetts, where he studied and taught as a resident for four years. He was the Holistic Health Director of the DeSisto School in Massachusetts and an athletic supervisor at the JCC on the Palisades in Tenafly, NJ. Andrew graduated Magna Cum Laude from Ramapo College's Honors Program with a BA in Psychology and studied clinical psychology in Fordham University's PhD program before shifting his attention to yoga and holistic healing.

Rabbi Steven Moskowitz is the rabbi of the Jewish Congregation of Brookville. Prior to joining the Jewish Congregation of Brookville, Rabbi Moskowitz had served as the assistant director for the 92nd Street Y's Bronfman Center for Jewish Life. Rabbi Moskowitz is among a select group of rabbis chosen to participate in CLAL's Rabbinic Leadership Retreat, and one of two rabbis from Long Island recently selected to participate in the Shalom Hartman Institute's prestigious Rabbinic Leadership Initiative. Rabbi Moskowitz graduated with honors from Franklin and Marshall College, received a Master's degree in Hebrew Letters from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and was ordained rabbi by the same institution.

Rabbi David Nelson, Ph.D. is the Associate Director of ARZA, the Association of Reform Zionists of America. He was ordained by the Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion in 1980, then earned a Ph.D. in Rabbinic Literature from New York University. He spent five years as the rabbi of a congregation in Long Island, then joined the faculty of CLAL (the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership) as a Senior Teaching Fellow, a post he held for more than 15 years. While at CLAL, he taught and lectured throughout the United States and Canada, focusing on Jewish Community leadership, contemporary spirituality, and Jewish pluralism. He has also taught at Hebrew Union College, NYU and Adelphi University. From 2001 through 2005, he was the Director of the Jewish Life Connection at the Bergen County YJCC, a community center in

northeastern New Jersey. Rabbi Nelson is the author of *Judaism, Physics, and God: Searching for Sacred Metaphors in a Post-Einstein World*.

Rabbi Michael Paley is the Scholar in Residence and the Director of the Jewish Resource Center of the UJA-Federation of New York. He is an Adjunct Professor at the Columbia School of Journalism and a member of the faculty of the Ivry Prozdor of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. Prior to his arrival at UJA, he was a professor of Jewish studies and Dean at Bard College, and the Vice - President of the Wexner Heritage Foundation. For many years, Rabbi Paley served as the University Chaplain at Columbia University. Rabbi Paley was founder and first director of the Edgar M. Bronfman Youth Fellowships in Israel, a program which brings together outstanding students from diverse Jewish backgrounds. He also served as the Jewish Chaplain at Dartmouth College.

Peter Pitzele, Ph.D. has his doctorate in literature from Harvard. He has taught literature at Harvard and Brooklyn College. He was trained in the methods of therapeutic theater and directed the Psychodrama Service at Four Winds Hospital for seventeen years. At that time and since he developed Bibliodrama, now recognized as a principal methodology in the field of contemporary midrash. Peter has written many articles and two books: **Our Fathers' Wells: A Personal Encounter with the Myths of Genesis**, and **Scripture Windows: Towards a Practice of Bibliodrama**. Peter was recently and for many years an adjunct faculty member of the Jewish Theological Seminary and Union Theological Seminary. He currently is Dean of Faculty of [StorahTelling](#), and Workshop Director for the intergenerational theater company Roots and Branches.

Rabbi Avraham Rabinowich is the leading Rabbi of the Bellmore Jewish Center. Rabbi Rabinowich started his Rabbinical Ordination with Rabbi Pinchas Hirschprung, Chief Rabbi of Montreal (1995), and he completed his internship at the Chief Rabbinical Court of Jerusalem, Israel in the Spring, 2000. In addition to his studies for Rabbinical Judicial Ordination, Rabbi Rabinowich also finished an Advanced Rabbinical Ordination with the Yeshiva Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary at Yeshiva University. Rabbi Rabinowich was also a member of the Israel Henry Beren Institute Of Higher Talmudic Studies at RIETS. Rabbi Rabinowich earned a Masters Degree in Jewish Philosophy at Yeshiva University and he is currently committed to complete a Ph.D. program at the school in the immediate future. Rabbi Rabinowich is a published author on subjects of Talmudic and Chasidic literature. He has successfully served in several Scholar-in-Residence programs in Israel, and throughout North America. He is well known for his teaching and his passion for Jewish studies, Kabbalah and Chasidic text.

Rabbi Cara Weinstein Rosenthal was ordained at the Jewish Theological Seminary, and graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a major in psychology. While at JTS, she concentrated her studies in Jewish philosophy. Rabbi Rosenthal served for two years as the spiritual leader of Congregation B'nai Israel in Freeport. She is currently working as an adult Jewish educator at various venues in the New York metropolitan area including the Florence Melton Adult Mini-School, the Nassau Community College Adult Lifelong Learning Program, and the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism – METNY Regions' Institute of Continuing Jewish Studies.

Rabbi Jeffrey Rubenstein, Ph.D. is a Professor in the Skirball Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies of New York University. He received his B.A. in Religion from Oberlin College, his M.A. in Talmud from the Jewish Theological Seminary, where he also received rabbinic ordination, and his Ph. D. from the Department of Religion of Columbia University. He has taught at Columbia University, the University of Pennsylvania and the Jewish Theological Seminary in addition to New York University. Dr. Rubenstein has published several books and articles.

Rabbi Arnold Samlan has been a Jewish educator for over 25 years in a variety of settings. He is presently the Director of the Nassau / Queens Services of the Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York, working with schools, synagogues, youth groups, and other organizations to provide a full range of educational services and programs to the Jewish Community of the New York area. Rabbi Samlan's academic background includes a Bachelors degree from Loyola University, Master of Social Work degree from University of Illinois and rabbinic ordination from Hebrew Theological College.

E. Joseph Septimus is a business consultant and teaches for J Learn, the Melton Mini School in Westchester, Limmud NY and the Manhattan JCC Tikkun. Joe has a Masters from NYU Business School and a Bachelors in Philosophy, studied at Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh in Israel and Yeshiva Chaim Berlin. He is an Executive Board Member of Darkhei Noam, a

progressive, halachick community in Manhattan, Treasurer of the Beth Din of America, a Wexner Heritage Fellow and an Alma NY Study group member.

Rabbi Michael Stanger is the Rabbi of the Old Westbury Hebrew Congregation where he has served since August, 2006. He was ordained from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, from where he also received an M.A. in Jewish Education. Rabbi Stanger served briefly as a Chaplain in the United States Navy and Coast Guard was a *CLAL* intern and engages in both Intra-religious and Inter-religious activities. Rabbi Stanger is very much involved with Jewish education both for adults and children, is currently working on a curriculum for the religious theology behind Fox's hit television series *The Simpsons*, and with his spare time has pursued an interest in interfaith work and activities.

Dr. Mervin Verbit is a sociologist who specializes in religion and in contemporary Jewish life. He has authored more than fifty journal articles, conference papers, and research reports on various aspects of Jewish identity and the Jewish community, both in the United States and in Israel. Dr. Verbit is a professor at Touro College. He has also taught at Brooklyn College, Yeshiva University, Bar Ilan University, Hebrew University, Tel Aviv University, and the Jewish Theological Seminary. He directs the Israel Studies Project at the CUNY Graduate Center and has held numerous leadership positions, both professionally and in the Jewish community. Dr. Verbit received his undergraduate degree from the University of Pennsylvania and has his Ph.D. from Columbia University.

Rabbi Art Vernon is the Spiritual Leader of the Jewish Community Center in West Hempstead. He previously served congregations in Newark and Florham Park, New Jersey following a 27 year career in Jewish Education. In his last Jewish education position, Rabbi Vernon staffed and wrote a national study on Adult Jewish Learning for the Jewish Education Service of North America (JESNA). Rabbi Vernon teaches adults at the Kislak Senior Adult Vacation Center of the NJ Y Camps and has taught at Kean University, Fairleigh Dickinson University and at Jewish community colleges in Cleveland and Washington, DC

Rabbi Irwin Zeplovitz studied at Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion in Jerusalem, Los Angeles, and Cincinnati, where he was ordained as a rabbi in 1984. In July

2003, he assumed the position of Senior Rabbi at The Community Synagogue. Rabbi Zeplovitz is chair of the Central Conference of American Rabbis Joint Commission on Sustaining Rabbinic Education, is President of the Alumni Association of HUC-JIR and serves on the United Jewish Communities Rabbinic Cabinet. Rabbi Zeplovitz has lectured and taught as scholar at a number of synagogues, appeared on radio and television, as well as in a wide variety of community settings. He has had numerous articles published in journals and newspapers.

For more information contact:

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J Learn is an exiting Long Island adult learning initiative created and largely funded by UJA-Federation of New York's Commission on Jewish Identity and Renewal (CoJIR). J Learn is a project of SAJES. UJA-Federation of New York cares for those in need, rescues those in harms way, and renews and strengthens the Jewish people in New York, in Israel, and around the world.



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