



A Night of Jewish Learning

Learning Guide

Session One ♦ 7:40 - 8:25 p.m.

Lisa Sacks

Beth Torah

Sit and Sing

Experience the Jewish contemplative practices of meditation and chanting. We'll explore how these forms of tefillah, of Jewish worship, can deepen our connection with one another, with the divine, and with ourselves.

Leora Londy

Temple Beth El of Northern Westchester

Holding Two Truths: A Creative Writing Workshop

What does it mean to live as if the whole world was created for you—and also remember that you are only but dust and ashes? Through conversation, reflection, and guided writing, this workshop invites you to wrestle with these questions in a creative, meaningful, personal and communal way. Come as you are.

Viki Bedo

Beth El Synagogue Center

Budapest, Then and Now: Weaving Memory Into a Living City

I grew up in Budapest, surrounded by layered stories—Jewish and Hungarian, tragic and beautiful, old and defiantly alive. In this session, I'll take you on a virtual walk through some of my favorite spots: synagogues, courtyards, street corners, and even a ruin bar or two. Along the way, we'll explore photos, maps, memories, and a few short texts that show how Jewish life in Budapest is not just something of the past. It is still here, evolving, and definitely worth discovering!

Daniel Gropper

Community Synagogue of Rye

Scott Weiner

Tamid

A Different Type of Spirit: Beer and Bourbon in the Jewish Tradition

We may know about making a l'chayim at a simcha, enjoying some wine over kiddish or even getting drunk on Purim. But did you know that Jews have a long history with beer and spirits dating back to Abraham? Come explore and taste a little to learn how the beer and spirits industry is infused and influenced by Jews and Judaism



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Evan Hoffman

Congregation Anshe Sholom

30 Miles, 30 Shuls

On July 2, 2024, Rabbi Evan Hoffman set his personal record for miles run/walked in a day. Covering 30 miles and 60,000 steps in the boroughs of Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens, he passed 30 shuls. These are their stories.

Dina Rosenberg

Congregation Sons of Israel

Holy Leaven! Sourdough and the Spirituality of Manna

In this hands-on workshop, you'll learn how to create and maintain your own sourdough starter, shape and score dough, and bake a beautiful, tangy loaf of sourdough bread. As the dough rises, we'll explore the story of manna in the Torah—bread from heaven—and what it teaches us about trust, gratitude, and daily sustenance. Come discover the sacred rhythm of baking and the spiritual wisdom baked into our tradition. *(Limit 30 Participants)*

Jonah Geffen

First Hebrew Congregation

Tzedek, Chesed, and the Algorithm: A Prophetic Approach to Data and Dignity

In a world shaped by algorithms, what would the prophets measure? This session explores how Isaiah, Micah, and other voices of our tradition assessed the moral health of their communities — and how their values of tzedek (justice) and hesed (compassion) might guide the way we design and use data today. Together, we'll imagine how even surveillance technology could be redeemed as a tool for covenantal care and human dignity.



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Jay Stein

Greenburgh Hebrew Center

Jews on the Small Screen: Television's Evolving Portrayal of Jewish Identity

We'll explore how Jewish characters, themes, and humor have appeared on the small screen over the decades—from Rhoda and The Nanny to Transparent, Unorthodox, Curb Your Enthusiasm, and beyond. We'll ask: What makes a character "Jewish"? How have depictions changed from the days of coded references to today's unapologetically Jewish storylines? And what does it mean when Jewishness is played for laughs—or for drama?

Adam Baldachin

Shaarei Tikvah

Jewish Lessons from the Alaskan Corridor: Memory, Mortality, and Mitzvah

We can learn so much from the beauty of nature and the culture of native peoples. During this session we will discuss some of the highlights from my recent cruise to Alaska and the way this rabbi encountered the glaciers, salmon, and totem poles along the way. Through a comparison of these experiences with Jewish sacred texts, we will discuss some pathways towards living with meaning and purpose.

Daniel Reiser

Temple Beth Shalom

Kafka: Dark Jewish Mystic

Franz Kafka is celebrated as one of the most important writers of the 20th century. His Jewishness was an important, if sometimes subtle, theme of his writing. In this session, we'll explore a few of his short writings in order to understand what makes Kafka a Jewish writer.



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Josh Bender

Temple Israel Center

Repetition: Dangerous Torah and Baseball

Both pitchers and Torah scholars learn through repetition, striving for mastery. Yet overuse—too many high-speed pitches or too much relentless study—can cause harm. We'll explore the benefits and risks of repetition: when does it build skill, and when does it stifle creativity or do more harm than good?

Dennis Ross

Temple Shaaray Tefila

Spirituality In Our Relationships: Hiding in Plain Sight

Judaism cultivates an awareness for food, freedom, relationships, and more, graces that hide in plain sight and would, without Jewish teaching and practice, otherwise pass unnoticed. The teachings of Jewish thinker, Martin Buber, author of the Jewish spiritual classic, *I and Thou*, encourage us to recognize the goodness and importance of spending quality time with people. Drawing from his recent book, *A Year with Martin Buber*, Rabbi Ross will introduce us to the ways of this Jewish spiritual luminary.

Alissa Platcow

Westchester Reform Temple

Judaism and Jazz

Description: Join Rabbi Platcow and discover the Jewish melodies you know hidden within Jazz standards by Gershwins and Irving Berlin and enjoy singing them together!

Jaymee Alpert

Neshama Body and Soul (NBS): An Opportunity for Physical and Spiritual Awakeness

NBS combines a challenging full-body workout with Jewish prayers, wisdom, and self-reflection to help you connect with you. Build strength from the inside out and finish the session feeling energized and grounded. Please wear clothes you can exercise in and bring a mat or towel and a water bottle. Together, we will move, pray, and connect.*Modifications will be offered for various exercises.



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Session Two ♦ 8:35 - 9:20 p.m.

Akiva Nelson

Bet Am Shalom

Hinei Ani (Here I Am)

Join Rabbi Nelson for 45 minutes of calming contemplative chant and a Jewish meditation practice. As a part of the practice, we'll explore the profound embodied theology found in "Hinei Ani," a mystical Hebrew language poem written by the contemporary Israel musician, Shye Ben Tzur.

Aaron Brusso

Bet Torah

Transformative Prayer Ideas

Sharing ideas from the prayerbook that can change the way we see and interact with the world.

Zach Sitkin

Beth El Synagogue Center

Should Jews Gamble?

Today, more than ever, we have easy access to different forms of gambling. Everything from online poker to sports betting apps, gambling has become a ubiquitous part of American culture. We will explore classic rabbinic sources that investigate the moral questions around gambling and whether it is halachically permissible for Jews or not.

Howard Goldsmith

Congregation Emanu-El

Ben Goldberg

Congregation KTI

Torah of Yellowstone

Join Rabbi Howard Goldsmith and Rabbi Ben Goldberg as we explore the spiritual and ethical teachings revealed in Yellowstone's landscapes and wildlife. Using photographs from their travels, we'll connect nature's grandeur to Jewish texts and discover ways to find God and deeper meaning in the world around us.



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Chaim Marder

Hebrew Institute of White Plains

Isaac in the Field

The Torah, in this coming week's portion, describes the scene at which Rebecca and Isaac meet. Isaac has gone out to "lasuach" in the field. In this session, we will explore what exactly Isaac was doing, what Rebecca witnessed in him, and how that impacts our appreciation of both of our ancestors and their unique relationship.

Eric Wasser

Jewish Community Center of Harrison

The Greatest Mitzvah? My Experience of Organ Donation

Eleven years ago, Rabbi Wasser donated a kidney to save the life of a friend. The night before surgery, a leading Halachist called him to say it was forbidden. What does the Talmud (Masekhet Sanhedrin) and Halacha teach about our obligation to our fellow Jews, our family, and ourselves?

Benjamin Resnick

Pelham Jewish Center

Textline: Jewish Fiction and Storytelling as a Devotional Activity

Rabbi Resnick will discuss his novel, Next Stop, which came out last fall from Simon and Schuster. A finalist for the Sami Rohr Prize, Next Stop is a gripping and hauntingly prescient novel that explores the precariousness of Jewish American life after a black hole consumes Israel, setting off a chain of global anomalies plunging the world into a time of peril and miracles.



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Session Two ✨8:35 - 9:20 p.m.

Morris Barzilai

Sinai Free Synagogue

From Sinai To Cappuccino: Finding Meaning in Torah and the National Days

In Jewish tradition, the weekly Torah portion teaches us to infuse each day with sacred purpose. In popular culture, National Days invite us to celebrate small joys, curiosities, and causes. For example, did you know November 8 is National Cappuccino Day? What happens when we bring these two together? In this session, we will explore how pairing National Days with the Torah portions of the week can inspire us to bring meaning, joy, and reflection into each day.

Annie Tucker

Temple Israel Center

The Akedah in Art and Literature

The Binding of Isaac is one of the best known and most challenging texts in the Hebrew Bible, inspiring both classical commentary and also art and poetry exploring its provocative questions and themes. In this class, we'll look at a familiar story with new eyes seeking to understand the way it's been interpreted throughout various ages and media.

Abby Sosland

The Leffell School

You've Got Talent! How the Rabbis understood your life's mission

What does "shlichut" (mission) mean for each of us? Looking at ancient and modern rabbinic perspectives, we will explore how we might use our own gifts to improve the world around us?

Cornelia Dalton

Westchester Jewish Center

Illuminating the Inside: A Creative Reflection

Guided by the Jewish Studio Process, we'll explore texts and themes of light, darkness, and inner resilience through guided reflection, creative expression, and optional sharing. No artistic experience needed — just curiosity and an open heart. Come discover what light emerges when tradition meets imagination.



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Molly Karp

Recognizing the Good: Hakarat HaTov

Life can be challenging, and can be filled with unpleasantness, grief, sorrow, and unhappiness. Recognizing the good is a way to shift our attention from what is wrong to what is right; what is good in life and in other people as opposed to what is bad. This practice can actually help us to be kinder, happier, and more satisfied with our lives as they unfold. We will explore and discuss this Jewish practice together.

Geoff Mitelman

Intelligence, Consciousness or a Soul? Some Jewish Views on AI

How do we define “intelligence” and how do we define “artificial”? Does AI have consciousness? A soul? And while traditional Jewish texts wouldn’t know about ChatGPT, what analogies can we draw from Biblical, Rabbinic and later Jewish texts?

To conclude the evening
join as a community for
dessert and
for spirited Israeli dancing with
Rabbi Leora Frankel
of Larchmont Temple &
Westchester Board of Rabbis