



# MORE CHOICES

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# KEDMA VOLUNTEER PROGRAM AT MIDRESHET MORIAH

EMPOWERING EACH STUDENT TO GIVE BACK IN A MEANINGFUL WAY

## Volunteer with Kids, Teenagers, and Students



### MAMAD HAROVA

Volunteer with elementary school-aged kids, many of whom are olim. Help run special activities (chugim).

Location: Old City

Times: 1:15-2:40 pm



### KFAR YELADIM DAVID

Volunteer weekly with kids from at risk homes. Help with homework, run after school activities and develop a big sister/little sister relationship.

Location: Bucharim and Ramat Shlomo

Time: 3-4 pm



### ZICHRON MENACHEM

Volunteer with the siblings of children who are sick — run a baking chug (after school activity) every other week and be a helping hand in the after school activities. Basic Hebrew preferred.

Location: Givat Mordechai near Shaarei

Tzedek

Times: 4-6 pm



## Volunteer with Individuals with Special Needs



### SHALVA

Volunteer at one of the premiere centers in Israel for individuals with special needs. Get to know young children and young adults at the maon (day care) and the after school program. Ideal to have basic Hebrew so that you can communicate with the Israeli staff and help the children with their homework.

**Location:** 1 Shalva Road (near Shaarei Tzedek)  
**Times:** 2-4:30

### MARSHALL CENTER FOR THE BLIND

Volunteer with individuals who are blind or who have significant visual impairment. Go on errands, to doctors appointments, to the Kotel, assist with tech and with child care.

**Location:** neighborhoods throughout Jerusalem

**Times:** 1.5-2 hours between 2-6 pm



### FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE

Visit a family and spend time with their special needs child or the siblings of the special needs child. This is a great opportunity to develop a relationship with a child and his/her family.

**Location:** neighborhoods throughout Jerusalem

**Time:** generally after 4 pm



### KEREN OR

Volunteer with severely disabled children who have both cognitive and visual impairments. Help in classrooms and make a big difference in these children's lives.

**Location:** Ramot Aleph  
**Time:** 2:30-5 pm



## Volunteer with the Elderly

### VISIT LOCAL ELDERLY

Visit local elderly who live in an assisted-living facility in Baka. Establish an inter-generational bond through weekly visits.

**Location:** Derech Beit Lechem  
**Times:** 4-6pm



### AMIGOUR

Volunteer in housing developments for elderly who are immigrants and are struggling financially. Ideal volunteer position for Russian or Yiddish speakers who enjoy giving chugim (classes) such as zumba or arts and crafts.

**Location:** Armon HaNetziv, Dov Gruner 17  
**Time:** flexible afternoon hours



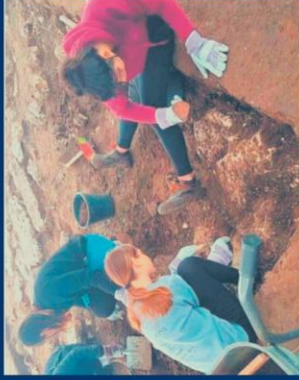


## The Great Outdoors in Jerusalem

### ISRAEL ANTIQUITIES AUTHORITY

Be a part of rediscovering our past in your backyard by being a part of the dig at Minherot HaKotel. Blundstones or boots required. Please note earlier volunteer time.

Location: Old City  
Times: 1:15-3 pm.



### COMMUNAL GARDEN

Volunteer at one of Jerusalem's largest communal gardens in Beit HaKerem. Help make Jerusalem beautiful and sustainable by maintaining the garden.

Location: Raanan Vitz 5, Beit HaKerem  
Time: 3-5 pm



### RESHUT HATEVA VE HAGANIM

Volunteer at Israel's national parks! Help maintain hiking trails, catalogue and photograph wildlife, talk to visitors about hiking safety, care for archaeological ruins in the parks, and work on irrigating the parks' plants.

Location: Ein Chinya, near Malcha  
Times: flexible afternoon hours



### JERUSALEM BIBLICAL ZOO

Greet Visitors, explain exhibits, and watch over fragile exhibits at the Biblical Zoo!

Location: Malcha  
Times: 2-5 pm



### MUSLALA

Focus on waste management, recycling, and gardening in an ecological center located on a Jerusalem rooftop right outside the Shuk.

Location: Yafo 97, rooftop  
Times: 2:30-4:30 pm



## Hospitals

### SHAAREI TZEDEK (BASIC HEBREW NEEDED)

1. Medical requirements: 3 shots for Corona vaccine, or machlma plus 2 Tetanus shot, Bring childhood vaccination list
2. Volunteer in different departments in the hospital (likely NOT children and babies) —e.g. cardiology, internal medicine. Volunteering will include helping nurses, running errands, delivering food and transferring patients.

Location: Shmuel Bayit street, Givat Mordechai  
Time: 4-6 pm



## Feeding the Hungry

### HINEINI SOUP KITCHEN

Help clean up and maintain this very busy soup kitchen in the heart of Jerusalem, and pack packages that are distributed to the hungry who arrive at Hineini.

Location: Shlomo Zion HaMalkah street  
Times: 1-3:15 pm





# The “Rakezet” at Midreshet Moriah: *Your Personal Faculty Mentor...*

The year in Israel is a time of intense personal reflection, and it's important to have someone you can always turn to who knows you and has time for you. At Midreshet Moriah, your “Rakezet” will be your personal faculty mentor, meeting with you one-on-one every week throughout the entire year. You get to use this time however you prefer: learning with your Rakezet any topic you choose; reflecting on a personal topic of concern to you; and much more. You'll spend Shabbat at your Rakezet's home too!





# HOW TO REGISTER

## Registration Timeline:

- We email you a username and password. You log in to make sure they work.
- We send you our registration FAQ
- You receive this semester's amazing course catalog... which you are currently reading!
- You receive this semester's schedule so you can see days & times & plan your schedule.
- Sun Sep 4, 12noon Eastern: Registration! Select your courses & weekly "Rakezet" meeting

## Steps in the Process:

Our registration system emailed you a username and password. If you've changed your email address from what you used for your seminary application, please immediately email our secretary, Liana, at [midreshetoffice@gmail.com](mailto:midreshetoffice@gmail.com) to notify her, since **the email address we have for you** is where we'll be sending your username and password. Many of you were using a school email for college applications and may now be using a different email, so please let us know ASAP. If you didn't receive an email with a username and password, please first check your spam folder; if it's not there, please email Liana at [midreshetoffice@gmail.com](mailto:midreshetoffice@gmail.com) and she will have one sent to you.

Once you receive the email containing your username and password, please **immediately test** that your login works by going to [www.midmorechoices.com/students](http://www.midmorechoices.com/students) and logging in. Please report any difficulties immediately to Liana at [midreshetoffice@gmail.com](mailto:midreshetoffice@gmail.com). We're asking you to test your login info right away so that by the time registration officially opens (Sep 4), we will have solved any problems so you can register. (Bookmark that website on your phone, since you'll use it to make all changes to your schedule.) While you're there, please update your personal info.

Your first step in registering is to browse through this **amazing** catalog, reading the course descriptions, circling everything that looks interesting, and being wowed by all of the incredible learning being offered

this semester, including many new courses. We don't say "More Choices" for nothing!

## A Little Friendly Advice:

- **Carefully read the course descriptions in the catalog; don't just go by the course names!** This will save you from signing up for the wrong courses just because the names sounded interesting. Also, many girls take more than one tefilah shiur and more than one parshah shiur, since each one is so different... as the course descriptions will show you.
- **Don't register with friends:** Your schedule reflects your unique goals and needs. Make sure to choose what's right for you. Registering along with friends a) will not produce the right schedule for you and b) will get in the way of your branching out and making new friends... Don't be the girl who wakes up in December and realizes she's different from her friends and needs her own unique schedule!
- **Timing:** A few days after receiving this catalog, you'll receive the schedule to see what day and time each course meets, and you'll start to make your schedule. Remember to check on the schedule whether your courses meet once, twice, or four times a week.
- **How do I decide:** If you're having trouble deciding between conflicting courses, just choose one of them for now and make a note to yourself to try the other course too. Once you've tried both, you'll decide which course is best for you. You'll have all the way until Thu Sep 30 to make switches as often as you like until you get it perfect.
- **CnC's:** Make sure to sign up for the number of "CnC" periods ("Chavrutot & Chaburot," see the section in this catalog all about it) that makes sense for you – enough time to do prep work for your shiurim, **review what you're learning** in your courses, do a few "chaburot" with teachers, and your own independent projects, like parshah. And **make a plan** for what to do in each of your



CnC periods so you don't just space out... The maximum number of CnC's without special permission is 8.

- “Late CnC” at 9:30pm is for the “shtark” and the night owls. If you're a girl who's going to step off the plane ready to “shteig,” this is where you'll connect with other girls who feel the same!
- Look carefully at your balance of תנ"ך, הלכה, and אמונה to see if it's what you want.
- **Load up:** At first, you might want to take more than the minimum of 37 hours, so you can try out more courses; then, once you've decided which courses to keep, you can drop down to fewer hours and schedule some breaks so you don't burn out.
- **Rough draft:** Think of your initial schedule as just your “rough draft” of what to try out first. You can log in and make changes every night! Naturally, you don't know the teachers yet, and your goals for the year are still developing. So when learning begins, come with an open mind, ready to **make switches**. Sometimes girls are just afraid of changing their schedule, even when they realize it's not what they want. Make sure that doesn't happen to you! Make changes until you're happy!
- **Your goals:** All in all, make sure to put together a schedule which will enable you to achieve the most you can this year. Think frequently about whether to change your schedule as your goals and learning level change.
- **Tefilah and Parshah:** This is *the* year to work on your tefilah and your basic knowledge of what's in the Torah. It's not an official “requirement,” but our advice is that **everyone should take at least one tefilah course** which helps you understand what you're saying and connect with it, **and at least one parshah course** so that you gain greater familiarity with the Torah (and have a Devar Torah for when you go places for Shabbat and they ask you for one!).

## Requirements:

- Required hours:
  - 1<sup>st</sup> hour of every day (10am Sun, 9am M-Th)
  - Nights 7:30 – 9:20 (Monday nights free!)
- You need a total of 37 hours...
  - ...8 hrs of which need to be afternoon hours
  - ...and something each afternoon.

- Tip: In the first weeks, when you're trying out courses, you may actually want to sign up for more than 37 hours, just so you can try out all the courses you're considering. Then you'll know which to keep and which to drop.
- Required courses:
  - Hilchot Shabbat (R. Lerner, R. Rafi, or R. Eli)
  - Shiur Klali, Monday @ 3pm

## Registration Day:

Once registration begins on Sun Sep 5 at 12pm Eastern, you have 48 hours to log in and select your courses. (**Students who are not financially clear will not be able to register** – please contact Ruthie now at [office@midreshetmoriah.org](mailto:office@midreshetmoriah.org) to clear up any remaining financial issues.) Log in, click “Register for Courses,” and select your courses!

**“Rakezet” meeting:** When you finish choosing your courses on midmorechoices, go back to the “Main Page” and click “Reserve Rakezet Slot.” On that tab, you will see the “Rakezet meeting slots” which are open for you. This is the time you'll meet one-on-one every week with your Rakezet (Faculty Mentor) to learn or schmooze. Each Rakezet will be making available a number of these time slots, and the earlier you register, the more choice of slots you'll have. Slots which are already taken by other students will be invisible to you; slots which are still open but which conflict with your schedule will appear in grey so that you can decide whether to go back and change your schedule in order to accommodate a Rakezet slot you prefer. Working your Rakezet meeting into your schedule may mean making some changes to your schedule – yet another reason to consider your schedule just a “rough draft.”

## Make Changes Until You're Happy:

Midmorechoices will open each night for you to change your schedule freely as often as you like (**no changes during the day**). Until then, you'll be trying out classes all day. So your registration is actually just a “rough draft” to work on for the first few weeks until you get it the way you want it. Tried a class and it's not for you? Just log in and switch. Have a schedule problem and not sure what to do? Come see Rav Eitan

or Bracha and we'll sit down to solve it together!

Class of 5783 is gonna rock!

THIS YEAR IS GOING TO BE...

**A - M - A - Z - I - N - G!**

CAN'T WAIT!



**TIP:** We do Chumash differently from what you've done before. Try it out!

# ewin

## Untold Stories of the Avot and Imahot

RAV EFRONI SCHLESINGER

The Torah covers over two thousand years of history, but the Chumash only teaches us about a handful of



leaders, a couple of their stories, and a tiny fraction of the details. There's so much information that we're missing! We may feel like we know Sarah Imeinu pretty well, but actually, the Torah tells very few stories about her, and she has barely any dialogue. Why

don't we hear more? If everything we've heard about Eisav is true, how could Yitzchak have favored him over Ya'akov? How can Ya'akov be the person we identify with the midah of "*emet*" if he is also the person who tricked his own father and stole a berachah? Through a close reading of the text, important insights of Chazal, and some illuminating midrashim, we'll paint a picture of what was going on in the lives of our ancestors behind the scenes.

## From Adam to Avraham

RAV EITAN MAYER

We've all learned Bereishit before, but you've never learned it this way! We're taught that there is both *peshat* and *derash* – but nearly everything we learned in school is *derash*! An entire "hidden" Torah remains to be discovered in *peshat*...

- Why does the Torah tell two versions of the creation story – and how can they conflict?!
- Why does the Torah tell the whole story of the Tower of Bavel and the punishment suffered by those who built it, but never tells us what they did wrong! There's more to the story in *peshat*...



- Since Adam sinned and No'ach failed as well, why not create Avraham as the first man to begin with?
- The Torah tells us clearly that No'ach was chosen for his righteousness. So why was Avraham chosen, and why doesn't the Torah tell us?
- If Yishmael was so obviously evil, how could Avraham be so blind as to want him to be his successor? There's more to the story in *peshat*...



In this textual shiur, designed for the student who loves mind-blowing surprises and thinking, we will meet the hidden Torah of *peshat*. Join us for an exploration which will forever change how you look at the Torah and make clear that "*peshat*" means anything but "the simple meaning"!

## Sefer Shemot: From Slavery to Sinai

MALKA HUBSCHER

We all know Bnei Yisrael were slaves for generations, but why did they "need" to be enslaved to begin with? Of all the people who could have saved the nation, why does Hashem specifically choose someone who was raised in Paroh's house – and does this make Moshe a better



or worse leader? Did Bnei Yisrael actually see Hashem at Har Sinai, and if so, how could they worship an idol so soon afterward? Sefer Shemot tells the fascinating story of Am Yisrael's roller-



coaster journey from גלות to גאולה, the transformation of a nation of slaves into a nation of God. With the aid of both classical and modern mefarshim, we will explore these and many more issues, developing both our textual and analytical skills.



## Life of Moshe Rabbeinu

RAV EITAN MAYER / SHANA BET

Do you love Moshe Rabbeinu? We all *know* Moshe Rabbeinu, we all respect him, we all appreciate him,



but do we *love* him to the degree that every year, when we read on Simchat Torah of his death, we have tears in our eyes? In this course, we will accompany Moshe Rabbeinu scene-by-scene, from his watery cradle to Pharaoh's castle, from slavery to Sinai, from the

Mishkan to the Egel, through all of his triumphs and every frustrating rebellion – and we will learn to love our greatest teacher like never before. We will begin with Moshe Rabbeinu's unusual personality: He seems to be constantly interfering with other people and getting himself into trouble, first with the two fighting Jews, and later with the shepherds harassing Yitro's daughters. Why can't he just mind his own business? Why are these stories so crucial that they are the only stories told about Moshe until age 80? Hashem argues with Moshe at great length to force him to go back to Egypt and save his people. But why does Hashem need Moshe anyway, since the real power behind the plagues is Hashem? What makes Moshe Rabbeinu the right leader to take the nation out of slavery and to deliver the Torah? We will analyze many sections in which Moshe Rabbeinu appears in the Torah, taking a fresh "*peshat*" perspective in order to deeply understand the background and personality of the greatest leader in Jewish history. What emerges – as always happens when we learn *peshat* instead of *derash* – is a Moshe Rabbeinu who reveals dimensions entirely hidden to us before.

**TIP: Carefully read the course descriptions.  
Don't go just by the course names!**

This will save you from signing up for the wrong courses just because the names sounded interesting.

## Matan Torah Today

MICHAEL PORATH-ZIBMAN / SHANA BET

One of the most extraordinary events that ever happened to the Jewish people was the experience of *Matan Torah* and receiving the *Aseret Ha-Dibberot*. The



Torah provides great detail about the events leading up to the actual revelation. In addition to the commandments themselves, how can the lessons of that back story apply to us today? How do we

understand the first of the Ten Commandments, "I am Hashem, your God" – is it a command, or just an introduction to the commands? How can God command us not to be jealous? While it's certainly important not to "bear false witness," why is it such a significant part of our core value system that it should make the ultimate "top ten" list of mitzvot? Through the eyes of classic *parshanim*, Chasidic Rebbes, and other commentators, we will dive into a textual journey that will enrich our own life experiences and *avodat Hashem*.

## The Roots of Avodat Hashem

RAV YONATON HIRSCHHORN / SHANA BET

Sefer VaYikra, with its focus on korbanot, taharah, and kedushah, is supposedly the most spiritual of the Chumashim. VaYikra



would seem to be the place to go to learn how to live a spiritual life and get closer to Hashem. But does it still "work" for us today? Imagine actually bringing a korban – really imagine it. You buy a sheep, bring it on a leash to the Beit Ha-Mikdash,



and watch as the kohanim slaughter it, do things with its blood, burn some parts of it and eat other parts. Feeling really spiritual? For us nowadays, animal sacrifice can seem like it belongs more in a butcher shop than in shul. Are we *supposed* to connect to korbanot nowadays, and can there be a deeper spiritual meaning to them, or were korbanot relatable only way back when? Join us to discover that the various korbanot are each different aspects



of Avodat Hashem, that each korban is a model for how to build a our unique relationship with Him! The roots of avodat Hashem are in VaYikra. Together, we will reveal those roots and use them to connect with Hashem in our own lives.

**TIP:** Your schedule reflects your unique goals and needs.  
Make sure to choose what's right for you.



## Discover Yourself: Sefer BeMidbar

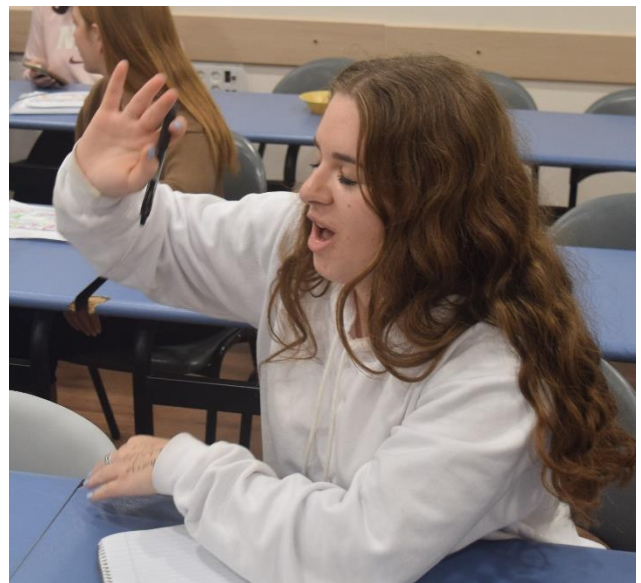
SEPHA KIRSHBLUM

Let's face it: When we think of Bnei Yisrael in the desert, we often think, "constant complainers." Many of us complain a lot too -- how can we stay focused on the great things ahead for us and not get bogged down in negativity and anxiety? How do we explain why the same people who witnessed the greatest open miracles in history – the plagues, the splitting sea, seeing God Himself at Sinai, collecting their daily meals straight from the sky – found themselves constantly questioning whether Hashem was with them, and how can we ourselves stay inspired in our own lives? Watching Bnei Yisrael try to transition from taking orders as slaves to deciding everything for themselves as free people, how do we successfully make that same transition in our own lives, from the dependency of childhood to the autonomy of being adults? We can all see how the fear of change and of the unknown stopped Bnei Yisrael in their tracks, but how do we avoid the same fate ourselves? Join us for a journey to independence and adulthood, personally and as a nation.

## Life-Changing Rashis and Rambans

RAV JONNY FRIEDMAN

Yosef has been gone for decades, missing in action and presumed dead. So when he decides to reveal himself and needs to make his father Yaakov believe he is actually still alive, why does he send wagons to his father – what do they mean? After Yaakov wrestled with (and beat!) the angel, why was the angel so reluctant to reveal his name to Yaakov? When Hashem first appeared to Moshe, why was it specifically in a thorn bush, of all things? We often hear, "*ma'aseh avot siman la-banim*," that events which occur in the lives of the Avot are similar to events which will occur to their descendants. But why, and what does this mean? We've all heard someone mention a "famous" Rashi or Ramban that we are all supposed to know... but it wasn't famous to us! If that's you, this class is for you! Of all the commentators, Rashi and Ramban are most known for the most crucial interpretations, ones which shape not only the way we understand a certain pasuk, but which serve as indispensable foundations for Jewish values and Jewish life. Join us to extract deep meaning which will impact our lives today!





**TIP:** every single *parshah* course is completely different. Many girls take two!



## Midrash of the Week

RAV ZVI RON

How did No'ach manage to feed all of those animals on the Ark? Who was his wife, the mysterious Mrs.



No'ach? Did the Flood really cover the entire world? Why was Eisav so hairy? Why do Chazal think that blessings only work on hidden things? What is the secret reason for sneezing? How

did Moshe find the secret spot where Yosef was buried in Egypt? Every week, we will learn classic and not yet classic midrashim related to the parshah. The source material for all Torah commentaries and divrei Torah is right here! We will study the midrashim together and extract the insights and lessons encoded within. All of your midrash questions answered and lessons learned!

understanding of the texts and life lessons and something great to say on Shabbat!

## Parshah Insights

RAV JASON KNAPEL

We are the people of the "Book," but so many of us



have never really gone through the "Book." Now is our chance! In this course, we will prepare the parshah together, reading, thinking and questioning so that we can understand what the Torah is telling us. Along the way, we will develop skills in creating Divrei Torah,

which will come in handy for Shabbat during the year and beyond.

## Parshah

MALKA HUBSCHER

"So, you're in seminary, learning all week long – what's this week's parshah?" "Did you learn anything



interesting on the parshah?" "Can you share a Devar Torah with us?" These are questions seminary students are often asked by friends, family, and often, their Shabbat hosts as well. Why wait until then to jump into the beauty and depth of the parshah? This course will give you the

chance to improve your knowledge, skills and understanding of the parshah, focusing on characters and themes. Each meeting will leave you with deeper

## Inspiration in the Parshah

RAV ELIE WAGNER

We will discover the most inspiring, instructive, informative and uplifting elements the weekly parshah has to offer. No texts or source sheets required, just an open mind and an open heart!





## Peshat in the Parshah

RAV EITAN MAYER

Ready for something really eye-opening? Join us for a very different point of view on the parshah than



what you've heard so far. Why was Adam's one and only test connected specifically to fruit? Why was Avraham's first test connected to leaving his land? Why does the Torah tell us scandalous stories like

Yehuda's taking Tamar for a prostitute? What *really* happened between Dina and Shechem? Why did Hashem need to take Moshe by surprise, jumping out at him from behind a burning bush like some kind of prank? What is the real (but secret!) function of the Aron in the Mishkan? If the nations of Canaan were so strong, how did Moshe fail to anticipate that the spies would return with such a frightening (and honest!) report? Each week, we will creatively develop a theme from a "*peshat*" perspective and take it to unexpected places. Leave your preconceptions at the door and prepare to expand your perspective on characters you thought you knew!



## Spiritual Insights in the Parshah

RAV YONATAN HIRSCHHORN

Sometimes, especially when learning Chumash or Parshah for an upcoming test, we fall into the



mentality that it's basically just a book of history, or a book of do's and don'ts. We don't think of it as addressing our own lives in a deeper way. But if we know how to listen, the parshah can provide us with personal guidance and inspiration. The hidden gems in each parshah

are waiting to be discovered by each generation, waiting with answers to our big questions. Together, we will dig below the surface facts of the stories in each parshah, read it anew, and find the spiritual insights which will illuminate our understanding and inspire us.



## Halachah in the Parshah

RAV ELIE WAGNER

Each week, we will explore a highly relevant area of practical halachah connected to the

parshah (whether the parshah itself contains mitzvot or just stories). For example: When we get to Parshat Bereishit and hear that Adam and Chava are permitted to eat only fruits and vegetables, we will explore what halachah thinks of



vegetarianism: Even though nowadays we are permitted to eat meat, is it better not to? When we get to Parshat No'ach and learn about the mitzvot of non-Jews, we'll ask: Can my non-Jewish friend celebrate Shabbat, or is it like a special gift just for the Jewish people? When we see Yaakov arranging to marry Rachel before Leah gets married, we'll investigate: Can I get engaged and married before my older sister, or do I need to wait for her? When Avraham's servant Eliezer arrives at the house of Rivka and takes care of the animals before eating his own meal, we'll explore: Can I eat breakfast before my dog does? And much, much more! You will arrive at Shabbat each week not only with something interesting to share at the table, but also with practical halachic knowledge you can put to use.

## Depths of Avodat Hashem

RAV CHAIM EISENSTEIN / SHANA BET

Joint Shana Bet Shiur

at Gruss Campus

Sponsored by Yeshiva University

Join us to explore keys to *avodat Hashem* in each week's *parshah* and the *Chagim* of each season.



**TIP:** Having trouble deciding between conflicting courses? Just choose one of them for now, and make a note to yourself to try the other course too. Once you've tried both, you'll decide which course is best for you. You can log in and make changes every night!



## The Rise of David Ha-Melech

RAV AVINOAM DURANI



David Ha-Melech is an enigma, such a rare, strange combination of opposites: David, the cold-hearted



warrior, and also David, the gentle-souled poet. Reading carefully through the events of his life, can we come to understand his internal tensions? Who was David to his family, which doubted him, his tribe, which rallied behind him, and his

nation, which finally united under him? What can we learn from the fact that betrayal and rebellion seem to follow David everywhere? How can you be supremely powerful, and yet remain vulnerable enough to admit when you have sinned? Is David the ideal monarch, and is there even such a concept as an ideal monarch for the Jewish nation in Eretz Yisrael? Learning from David's life, what qualities must a successful leader of Israel possess? We will explore the fascinating personality and career of David, founder of our Messianic line, shining a new light on these famous stories and discovering the messages that continue to echo into our own lives today. Our heightened understanding of the past will allow us to judge more intelligently the challenges of modern-day Israel and connect the Kingdom of David with the modern-day government of Israel.

## Life of David Ha-Melech

RAV YONATON HIRSCHHORN

David Ha-Melech, right? What a great leader – he transformed us from a handful of tribes into the very first Jewish empire! He wrote the book of Tehilim, which we use every single day! Every Jewish king including Mashiach is known as his son (“Mashiach

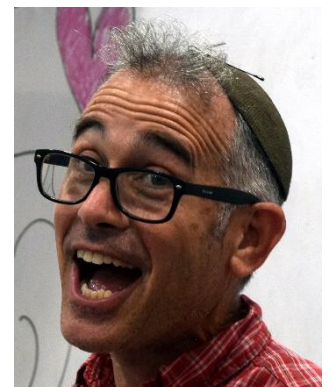
ben David”). On the other hand, what about the story with Bat Sheva? What about his children raping and murdering each other? Or King Sha’ul hunting him down for treason to the crown? Are the Rabbis biased – were we made to believe David Ha-Melech is great and he’s really not, or is there something important we’re missing in understanding his greatness? Join us to find out why he is worthy to be the father of Mashiach, despite his mistakes (or maybe *because* of his mistakes...).



## Sefer Ezra

RAV ZVI RON

Do these sound familiar: a high intermarriage rate; massive ignorance of Torah and Hebrew; widespread Shabbat desecration; and antagonistic neighbors in Eretz Yisrael? Sound eerily like Jewish life today? Learn about the challenges faced by Bnei Yisrael as they returned from decades of exile in Babylonia to build the second Beit Ha-Mikdash and restart Jewish life in Israel. We will see how Ezra and Nechemyah led the Jewish people in a new era and dealt with problems that we still face today.





## Leadership in Sefer Melachim

RAV ASHER MANNING



King Shlomo was the smartest man ever, builder of the First Temple, our wealthiest king, and the one



whose reign was marked by peace and success... so how did he, of all people, end up worshipping other gods? In the next generation, King Yeravam tried to rule more fairly and make Judaism more applicable to his times, but instead, he goes

down in history as one of our all-time villains. Where did he go wrong? King Achav never seems so evil in his heart... well, maybe a little impulsive and immature – and yet he and Queen Izevel lead the nation in worshipping Ba'al and abandoning Hashem, ultimately declaring Eliyahu Ha-Navi an outlaw and seeking his death. Where did he miss a turn in balancing his inner Jewish identity with outside social pressure? Queen Atalyah cruelly murdered her own family so that no one would challenge her for the throne – but was this just a plain old grab for power, or did she take this horrific step with deep pain, attempting to build a more peaceful society for her people? We all make mistakes. The question is what we learn from them. Every leader struggles; every leader, no matter how talented and successful, is only human; every leader fails, sometimes spectacularly. Join us as we explore the ups and downs of the biggest experiment in Jewish leadership, the drama, comedy and tragedy of the Kings & Queens of Israel. Through these cases and many more, we shall try to understand what true leadership means and what potential for both good and evil we hold within.

## Trei Asar: Yonah and Chabakuk

RAV ZVI RON

Meet Yonah, the prophet who tried to run away from Hashem and was swallowed by a fish! You can't run away from God, so what was he thinking? Did the people of Nineveh really do teshuvah when Yonah came to threaten them



in Hashem's name? Why did Hashem provide them the opportunity and encouragement to repent? And why is Yonah so angry when they actually *do* repent? And then we'll go on to meet Chabakuk, the *navi* who wonders why evil people aren't punished even when they don't repent. Join us to gain insight into how Hashem runs the world and balances mercy and justice.

## Sefer Tehilim

RAV YONATON HIRSCHHORN

When someone is sick, we start a *Tehilim* group. When someone needs a *shiduch*, we say *Tehilim* for her. When someone passes away, we say *Tehilim* at his or her grave. Why? When it's *Rosh Chodesh* or *chag*, we say – you guessed it – *Tehilim* again (in *Hallel*). For *Kabbalat Shabbat*, we say – yup – *Tehilim*. Even our daily *Pesukei De-Zimra* is composed of *Tehilim*. What makes this book so special? Why is it our go-to for the saddest and highest moments? Is it the identity of the author(s)? Is it the holiness of the book? Let's take a deep dive into every Jew's go-to *tefilah* book: Their words; our meaning; your inner song.



## Chamesh Megilot: Rut + Kohelet

MALKA HUBSCHER

What is a *megilah*? How is it different from other books in Tanach? What are the connections between *Rut* and *Esther*? Why does Shlomo Ha-Melech sound so depressed in *Kohelet*? How do we understand what the passionate love songs of *Shir Ha-Shirim* are doing in Tanach? How are *Eichah's* descriptions of the destroyed, desolate Jerusalem still relevant today? We will address what is unique about each of the five *Megilot*, studying the text and historical context of



each *Megilah* and the themes unique to each, and uncovering new insights into these well-known *sefarim*.

## Sefer Mishlei: Perek 1-11

RAV RAFI ROSENBLUM

*Mishlei* is unique among the 24 books of Tanach in that the majority of its *pesukim*, rather than being individual pieces of a larger story or halachic section, are actually self-contained observations on life or pieces of advice all on their own. This means that the sefer is jam-packed with meaning, with every single *pasuk* its own new world of ideas and reflections. It also means *Mishlei* can be a challenging *sefer*, since every *pasuk* stands on its own and requires analysis. Perhaps this should come as no surprise in *Mishlei*, since it was written by Shlomo Ha-Melech, the smartest person ever. Join us to increase your “wisdom quotient” and improve your character, exploring the messages that Shlomo is hinting to us across the centuries.



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## Kohelet: Why Are We Here?

RAV YONATON HIRSCHHORN

He had it all! His net worth was greater than Elon Musk's (\$225 billion). He had more Instagram followers than Kylie Jenner (353 million). He was re-tweeted more often than Justin Bieber. Do you want a mansion by the Kotel plaza? He had a palace! But he was sad. He had it all! But it was all meaningless. Why doesn't being rich and famous make us happy? The man who



had it all will share with us why money can't buy happiness: King Shlomo had the greatest empire ever; all the wit and wisdom of Twitter combined; the coolest Instagram stories; and more money than Bill Gates and Jeff Bezos combined. But it was meaningless. Come find out why it was meaningless – and mostly, come find out what is meaningful.

## The Wisdom of Mishlei

BRACHA KROHN / SHANA BET

A special hour focusing on the wisdom in *Sefer Mishlei*, topic by topic. Each week, we will learn *pesukim* relating to a theme and discuss that issue's relevance in our lives, looking at classic and contemporary sources. Shlomo ha-Melech's insight will blow you away!



**TIP:** At first, you might want to take more than the minimum of 37 hours, so you can try out more courses; then, once you've decided which courses to keep, you can drop down to fewer hours and schedule some breaks so you don't burn out.





# TOPICS IN TANACH

## Dysfunctional Families in Tanach

NEIMA NOVETSKY

We often look to Tanach for role models for how we should live our lives. When it comes to relationships,



however, Tanach often seems to have many more examples of what we should not imitate than what we should – polygamy, fratricide (brothers killing each other), incest, rape, intermarriage – it's all there. How are we to understand all these

dysfunctional relationships? Why does the *navi* Hoshe'a marry a prostitute? How can Yiftach offer his daughter as a sacrifice? What's up with Shimshon's falling for Philistine women, or with angels marrying humans? How does the protective older sister Miriam become a jealous, gossiping sibling? Each week, this course will explore a different relationship and try to unravel what is going on and what we are supposed to learn from the story.

## Sketchy Characters in Tanach

RAV ASHER MANNING

Ever notice that Tanach is full of very sketchy



characters that play a crucial part in our nation's story? Spies, murderers, rapists, bandits, double agents, con-men, adulterers, assassins – fiction has nothing on the Tanach! But a close read leaves us with nothing but questions: What the

heck came over Lot's incestuous daughters!? Is the tribe of Yehuda really descended from a prostitute!? Was Potifar's seductive wife onto something?



Midwives running an underground rebellion – honestly!? Was Israel taken over by the biblical equivalent of a biker gang!? Did the King of Israel really visit a witch? Did Moshe have step-brothers? Is Egyptian magic a real thing, or was it all done by illusion? Greedy prophets? Crooked Cohanim? Actual giants!? Join us as we meet the lesser-known individuals hiding in the shadows. This is your opportunity to explore the murky realms of Tanach rarely learned, to go where you've never gone before. Even the most vile characters have a lesson to teach us. In truth, no portrait is black and white, and it is time that we put aside simplistic categorizations of absolute 'goodies' and 'baddies.' Life is complex, and unsurprisingly, so is our text. Join us to find out more!

## "Supporting Actors" in Tanach

MALKA HUBSCHER

We often feel we understand the "famous" characters in Tanach, people like Avraham and Sarah, Yehoshua or King David. But what about the lesser-known heroes and villains, those who play "supporting" roles in stories throughout Tanach – who was "Bat Shu'a," the Cana'anite woman who became Yehuda's first wife, and what did he see in her to make him cross



every line in the family book and marry a Cana'anite? What about Bilhah, whom Ya'akov married just as a "surrogate mother" so that Rachel could have children through her – what was Bilhah's actual relationship with Ya'akov really like? How about Avishag, who was brought into David's life in his old age to literally keep him warm – how did they relate to one another? These supporting actors are not only interesting, they are often the key to understanding an entire biblical story. In this course, we will dive

into stories in Tanach, focusing on the development and personalities of the “supporting actors” and discovering who they really were.

## Women in Tanach

NEIMA NOVETSKY

What makes Rachav, a non-Jew and prostitute we meet in Sefer Yehoshua, turn her back on her own



people and help Am Yisrael conquer Yericho instead? What can we learn about the power of tefilah from Chanah, whose prayer is the model for our tefilot on Rosh Ha-Shanah and throughout the year? Does the witch of Ein Dor actually summon

the spirit of the dead Shmuel Ha-Navi so that Sha’ul can consult his old mentor – or is she just a really good faker? Queen Izevel is reviled as one of the most wicked people in all of Tanach – what did she do to deserve that reputation, and what can we learn from her about how power corrupts? Tanach presents several women who take extreme measures to ensure the continuity of a family line, and all of them happen to be ancestors of David Ha-Melech; what can we learn from Tamar, who impersonates a prostitute; Lot’s daughters, who sleep with their own father; and Ruth, who creeps up on Boaz in the middle of the night to propose marriage? When are unorthodox tactics justified and when not? This course will look at selected women in Tanach, some well known, many less so (ever heard of Gomer bat Divlayim?), some role models, others evil. All of their stories are worth exploring and will yield fascinating insights into human nature, life, and women’s special contributions to Am Yisrael.

## Pirkei Avot in Tanach

SEPHA KIRSHBLUM

Each time we meet, we will begin with a few lines from *Pirkei Avot* and then learn a story in Tanach which illustrates and deepens the



message of the *Mishnah*. We will learn stories from Tanach and see how each story brings to life the lessons of the *Mishnah* and the ideals by which we should shape our own personal lives today.



## Puzzling Personalities in Tanach

RAV EITAN MAYER

Miriam first appears to us at the Nile’s edge, watching worriedly over baby Moshe and using her smarts to arrange for him to spend his first years at home with his family. A pretty devoted sister, right? Can this be the same sister who later goes behind that same brother’s back and, unprovoked, accuses him – the most humble person in the world! – of being arrogant? What happened to all that sisterly devotion? David Ha-Melech first appears to us as the brash, bright-eyed young man who fearlessly faces down Goliath, offended for the honor of Hashem and Am Yisrael. How can this be the same person who, once king, impulsively commits adultery with his married neighbor, Bat-Sheva, and then, to cover his tracks, sends her husband to his death? And you’re telling me this same person wrote Tehilim, which made it into Tanach and from which we draw so many of our tefilot? Is David one of the good guys – or the bad? Join us to take a close look at complex figures in Tanach whose personalities and actions often puzzle and perplex us, including Shlomo Ha-Melech, Esther, Eliyahu, and the entire generation of Jews who left Egypt. We will come away with a deeper understanding of human nature and of ourselves.



## Hyperlinks in Tanach

SEPHA KIRSHBLUM



Since we were kids, we have heard that the Torah is extremely careful about every word used, and we've



been trained to be sensitive to their significance. So it's not a coincidence when specific words repeat themselves in different stories, creating a bridge ("hyperlink") between the sections involved. Why is Haman referred to as "Haman Ha-Agagi," and the only family

reference for Esther is that she comes from Kish – what do these hints reveal? Why do both references bring us back to Sha'ul? Who exactly was Lot – is the Torah comparing him to Avraham, or to Orpah? What is the hidden connection between Rachel and Michal, both of whom are trying to save their husbands from their fathers? As we learn to become more sensitive to the language of Tanach, we will see how one story in Tanach functions as a commentary on another story!

## Learning from Mistakes

NEIMA NOVETSKY

Aharon Ha-Kohen appears to err pretty badly with the sin of the Golden Calf (Hashem has to be



dissuaded from killing him!), yet he still merits to be the Kohen Gadol. Why? What about David and Batsheva – after apparently committing both adultery and murder, he still manages to remain both the king and the father of

mashiach. How? Is Shimon and Levi's reaction to Dina's rape in Shechem (yup, they massacre every man in town) an overreaction or a fair response? Yaakov appears to take advantage of Eisav to buy the birthright. Why is that OK? This course will look at stories in Tanach where biblical figures appear to make mistakes and poor decisions or otherwise act improperly. Is it OK to say that our leaders made mistakes? How did they move beyond their errors, and how can we learn from them to do the same? As

we study these stories and others, we'll look both at how our parshanim have understood them and what we can learn from them about our own shortcomings, ReTonight how to correct them, and how to move forward after failure.

## Tanach's "Greatest Hits"

MALKA HUBSCHER / SHANA BET

Have you ever been in a *shiur* where the teacher refers to a "very important and well known nevu'ah," and you had no idea what they were talking about? Do you wish you understood some of the famous *Haftarot*? In this course, we will learn together a selection of the most famous, often-quoted *nevu'ot* throughout Tanach. We will study the text on the level of *peshat* as well as exploring how the messages of these prophecies remain relevant even in today's world.



## Walking the Streets of Jerusalem

RAV KALMAN FLAKS

You live in Jerusalem this entire year – what a great opportunity to get better acquainted with the world's holiest city! Together, we will journey to different neighborhoods, learning Torah and history from the names and features of the streets. Learning on "Azaryah Street," have you ever wondered who Azaryah was? "Emek Refa'im" actually means "Valley of Ghosts" – but why would anyone think our neighborhood is haunted? Who was "Ben Yehuda," and why was an important street named after him? Why is the gate of the Old City named Sha'ar Yafo? We will learn a lot with our eyes, ears and feet, and get some exercise as well!









# הלכה

## "FOCUS" TOPICS



### God-Level Dilemmas in Medicine

RAV URI COHEN

Do terminal patients have a right to hear their true diagnosis no matter what, or should a doctor



withhold the hard facts when she feels the news itself might shorten the patient's life? Does halachah allow all types of cosmetic surgery, or are there limits due to the risks of surgery? Do we violate Shabbat to save everyone, or only Jews? In an

emergency situation (like a pandemic) with limited time and limited skilled hands, how should a doctor decide which patients to treat first? Is it OK to pay money in order to receive a donated organ, or should it be decided by who needs the organ most, or is most likely to survive, or who asked first? Our ever-advancing medical capabilities give us more and more God-like capabilities every day, but along with those God-like powers come God-level dilemmas. Join us to investigate the fascinating, dramatic world of medical ethics, where life-and-death questions and cutting-edge technology meet our eternal system of halachah.

### "Good Talk!"

BRACHA KROHN

Do you sometimes regret saying something? (Who doesn't!) Do you sometimes wish you *had* said something, and wonder why you didn't? Have you ever wondered why someone else's words hurt you or matter so much to you? ("Sticks and stones might break my bones but names will never hurt me" – just



not true, right?) In this course, we will discuss the power of speech and the way our words affect others and even ourselves. Going way beyond just "lashon ha-ra," we will learn about many different mitzvot that relate to speech and examine stories in Tanach where speech changed the course of history. If you want to feel inspired and motivated to use your words more kindly and responsibly, and feel stronger and less affected by others' destructive words, this course is for you! The learning we do each week will be relevant immediately and give you something to think about and work on until we see each other again.

### Deep Thoughts on the Chagim

RAV JASON KNAPEL

What is the real meaning behind the sound of the Shofar? Why do we sometimes say the whole Hallel, and other times just part of it? What is the hidden





meaning behind the lighting of the Menorah? Is it a mitzvah to get drunk on Purim, and if so, why? In today's day and age, why do we still "lean" at the Seder to show freedom? Through deep analysis of the traditional sources, we will not only understand the halachah, but also the philosophical background of the chagim and how the very details of the halachah help connect us with the spirit of the day.

## Practical Berachot and Kashrut

RABBI YITZCHAK LERNER

This will be a crash course in Berachot (first part of the semester) and Kashrut (second part of the semester):



• **Berachot:** If I start eating in my dorm room and then go take a walk but continue munching, do I need a new *berachah*? If I take little sips from my water bottle all day, do I just make one *berachah* in the morning and I'm good-to-go all day? (And do I just

make one *borei nefashot* at night after my last sip?) Surprised to hear that *ha-motzi* doesn't actually cover everything during the meal, and curious to know what's not included? Tuna salad for lunch – which *berachah*? Crackers with cheese and tomatoes for a snack – what do I say? It's pizza time – *mezonot* or *ha-motzi*? These questions and many more come up every day of our halachic lives. We will explore the sources and get to bottom-line practical *halachah*.

• **Kashrut:** We will cover practical topics in Kashrut to enable you to run your own kosher kitchen: How to properly bake something "milk" in a "meat" oven; checking food for insects; how to deal with a microwave whose status is problematic; blood spots in eggs; how and when to separate "*challah*"; how long to wait between meat & milk; and many other topics. We will also relate to cleaning & *kashering* for Pesach; *tevilat keilim*; how to *kasher* utensils (we'll actually *kasher* things together to see how it's done); what "*glatt kosher*" and "*mehadrin*" really mean;

*halachot* related to food cooked by a non-Jew; how to find kosher food when traveling far from a Jewish community or on a cruise; and more.

## Advanced Gemara

RAV EITAN MAYER



Looking for a great way to become a clearer thinker, a more creative problem-solver, a more skilled pattern-recognizer

(yeah, that's not really a word), and a better analyst of any problem you'll face for the rest of your life? Well, keep dreaming! Just kidding – the place to find all those things is in the world of Advanced Gemara, designed for those with Gemara background but open



to anyone looking for a real intellectual challenge in the world of Torah. As we successfully build Gemara thinking skills, you'll see you can use those skills on everything else too, from Tanach to taxes (I kid you not, tons of Gemara learners go into tax law), from philosophy to phrenology (now I am kidding, go Google that), from relationships to real estate. Much more than just understanding the Gemara text, we will get inside the brilliant minds of the people who built our whole system and try to follow their thought processes – what made them each think what they thought, why they disagree when they do. As we improve our textual skills, we will also learn how to ask the right key questions when approaching a new topic; how to make meaningful analytical distinctions; and how to brainstorm creative solutions to challenging problems.





## Introduction to Gemara

RAV JASON KNAPEL



Have you ever wanted to open up a *Gemara* to find out what it's all about, but thought it would be too hard or out of your comfort zone? In this course, we will become familiar with the text of the *Gemara*, as we also learn how to think like the *Gemara*, the backbone of all of *Torah She-be-al Peh*. We will be touching on topics that affect our daily Jewish lives.

## Interpersonal Halachah

RAV RAFI ROSENBLUM

You've decided to daven at the Kotel every week. Amazing! The only problem is that every time you go



there, you end up giving away a small fortune in *tzedakah* money. Are you obligated to give every single person that asks for money? If so, how much must you give them? Can you lie and say you don't have any money? Is there ever a time that you are allowed to lie? Can I

ever tell a friend that a mutual friend of ours has a lying problem? When can I tell someone something about someone, and when is it *lashon ha-ra*? In this course, we will cover many of the *halachot* that come up in our daily interactions with other people.

## Laws and Meaning of Tefilah

RABBI YITZCHAK LERNER



I really want *tefilah* to be part of my daily routine, but to be honest, I really don't know the meaning of what I'm saying and the rules which should guide me. Do women need to pray anything formal, or may they make do with just a few *berachot* each day? Do I need to say *Minchah*? When is the latest time I can still say *Shacharit* and *Minchah*? If I missed a *tefilah*, can I make it up? Do I answer "amen" or "kedushah" if I'm in the middle of another *tefilah*? Should I catch up during Torah reading, or listen to the reading? Is there any difference whether I pray at home or with a *minyan*? If I'm late or fall behind, what can I skip in order to catch up? Is it better to say less but with more *kavanah*, or say everything I can? Can I take a jog before *tefilah*, or study for a test, or take the train, or have breakfast? The year in Israel is prime

time to take your *tefilah* to the next level so that you can continue a strong connection with Hashem in college and beyond. Can there be any kind of real relationship without good communication? In addition to knowing what we're saying and learning how to focus, there is also a lot to know about the what, the when, the how, and the why of *tefilah*, and even if we've been "*davening*" for years, we still may not know. Join us to examine these questions and more, starting with *Modeh Ani* all the way to *Aleinu*.



## Co-Ed Halachah

RAV YITZCHAK LERNER

What is the halachah – why are some schools single-sex and others coed? And why do some have English and math together, but not Torah? I've heard all about "shomer negi'ah," but is this a real thing, or is it just for super-Jews? I need to see the sources! Is it OK to be friends with boys? How about dating when it's not for marriage? Mixed swimming seems to be a no-no, but can I just sit by the beach or pool and tan, as long as I stay out of the water? When I'm dating, and my BF and I want some alone time, how do we do that while still keeping the laws of "yichud"? How do I avoid yichud problems when a male colleague and I are the only ones in the office? If these are some of your questions and you want to look at the sources and discuss these issues, then this class is for you.

## Tefilah: Meaning and Halachah

RAV RAFI ROSENBLUM / SHANA BET



You just woke up, you're starving, and you have a million things to do. But what activities are permitted before *tefilah* in the morning? Can you go for a jog? Does it matter if you can't concentrate without your morning coffee? At shul, you're in the middle of *davening* and someone asks you a question – can you



answer? You finished your *Shemoneh Esrei* and you realize that you forgot “*Mashiv Ha-Ru’ach*” – what now? You’ve taken on *davening Minchah*, but you accidentally forgot today – is there anything to do? In this course, we’ll cover the topics needed to answer these questions and many more, in addition to exploring the content of the *tefilot* themselves.

## Hilchot Shabbat (Adv)

RAV ELI WAGNER



In this textual course on *Hilchot Shabbat*, we will sharpen our skills and learn the principles behind the *halachah* so we’ll know what to do in similar cases. Can I use electric lights for Shabbat candles? If my mom is away, who should light them? Can I make kiddush for my 13 year-old brother, or should he make it for me? Is Shabbat clothing “only for going to shul” or for all of Shabbat? Do I really need to eat “*Shaleshudes*” (*Se’udah Shelishit*), or is that just for



boys, or optional for everyone? I forgot to place my flowers in the vase before Shabbat – can I do that now? Can I wear high heels on Shabbat? Is it OK to ride a bike and play in a tree house? How do I dry my wet hair on Shabbat with a towel? We’ll learn each topic in depth rather than covering as many topics as possible, coming away from each topic with better skills and clear bottom-line halachic conclusions.

## Hilchot Shabbat: Positive Mitzvot and Melachot of the Kitchen

RAV YITZCHAK LERNER / TWO SECTIONS TO CHOOSE FROM

How do I light candles in a hotel or dorm? What happens if I need to light candles and then go in a car? What is considered proper dress for Shabbat? Do I need to make kiddush every time I eat on Shabbat? What happens if there’s no one else around to make havdalah? And what about cosmetics? How do I navigate the kitchen on Shabbat – preparing salad, making tea, and warming up food – without running into trouble? If I forgot to deactivate the fridge light, am I facing a hungry Shabbat, or is there an alternative? How do I open packages in a permitted manner? Discussion and clear bottom-line halachic conclusions on a very wide range of Shabbat topics.



## Hilchot Shabbat: Positive Mitzvot and Melachot of the Kitchen

RAV RAFI ROSENBLUM

Over the course of a Shabbat, especially when unusual circumstances arise, many questions come up. For example, what do you use for Kiddush if it turns out you have no grape juice? If people are taking forever to get home from shul, can you have a snack or do you need to wait for Kiddush (or make your own)? Is there a permitted way to peel carrots on Shabbat? Many people (like me) enjoy putting *challah* into their soup Friday night. Is that allowed,





or will the hot soup actually cook the *challah*? What about those people (me again) who don't love tomatoes – can I take them out of a salad? In this course, you will learn the

answer to these questions and cover many, many other topics. We will cover topics starting from preparing before Shabbat all the way to making *havdalah* after Shabbat, and everything in between.





# הלכה

## "BROAD" TOPICS

What's in this section: Courses which will bring together \*lots\* of different topics under one theme (like Sephardic halachah, daily halachah, life cycle, etc.)

### Sephardic Halachah and Minhagim

RAV AVINOAM DURANI

How should I pray/daven if I am from a Sephardic family, but I grew up in an Ashkenazi school or shul?



What if one of my parents is Sephardi and the other is Ashkenazi? What are the obligations of daily *tefilah* for Sephardic women? Do I need to stand during Kadish and when the Aseret Ha-Dibrot are read? What kashrut issues should I

pay special attention to as a Sephardi – can I rely on Ashkenazi standards for kosher meat and for food cooked by non-Jews, or do I need to be more careful about “hechshers”? What are the accepted Sephardic practices on Shabbat for lighting candles, warming up food, and special customs of the Chag and Shabbat table? Despite the beautiful overall *achdut* that we enjoy today (especially in Israel), we continue to witness the division between Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jews, a split based on geographical, socio-cultural, and religious factors. In our course, we will explore the roots of this division and learn select practical halachot. Along the way, we will also get better acquainted with great Poskim, starting from Rabbi Yosef Karo and Rabbi Moshe Isserles (authors of the Shulchan Aruch) and ending with modern greats such as Rav Ovadia Yosef and Rav Moshe Feinstein. Join us to better relate to your Jewish identity, be proud of it, and understand where this beauty comes from.

### Mysteries of the Minhagim

RAV ZVI RON

Ever find yourself at a lake or stream on Rosh Ha-Shanah for “*tashlich*,” wondering how in the world throwing little pieces of bread into the water can make your sins go away? Is it like we can either confess and repent, or just throw bread in the water, and either option is equally effective? And how about “*kapparot*” –



are you serious that I can spend the whole year committing sins, and then just transfer them onto a chicken, who then gets killed for my sins? What a scam! And why is it a chicken anyway? Why do we eat special foods on Rosh Ha-Shanah, do they really make us have a sweet year? And why do we dip specifically an apple into honey? Here's your chance to finally find out why we do what we do and learn the background behind the minhagim we are familiar with.

### Halachah in the Parshah

RAV ELIE WAGNER

Each week, we will explore a highly relevant area of practical halachah connected to the parshah (whether the parshah itself contains mitzvot or just stories). For example: When we get to Parshat Bereishit and hear that Adam and Chava are permitted to eat only fruits and vegetables, we will explore what halachah thinks of vegetarianism – even though nowadays we are permitted to eat meat, is it better not to? When we get to Parshat





No'ach and learn about the mitzvot of non-Jews, we'll ask: Can my non-Jewish friend celebrate Shabbat, or is it like a special gift just for the Jewish people? When we see Yaakov arranging to marry Rachel before Leah gets married, we'll investigate: Can I get

engaged and married before my older sister, or do I need to wait for her? When Avraham's servant Eliezer arrives at the house of Rivka and takes care of the animals before eating his own meal, we'll explore: Can I eat breakfast before my dog does? And much much more! You will arrive at Shabbat each week not only with something interesting to share at the table, but also with practical halachic knowledge you can put to use.

## Urban Myths of Halachah

RAV KALMAN FLAKS

"Respecting your parents means always doing what they tell you" – so if they tell you what career you



must pursue, which city to live in, how many children to have, you must obey? "It's assur to talk to boys" – where is the line between being normal and polite, and crossing a halachic boundary? "It's assur to give tzedakah to goyim!" – is there any truth to this? "Women

can't say Kiddush or learn Gemara" – what do the sources say? "Shehakol covers everything," "Studying kabbalah is forbidden until age 40," "Movies are assur," "If you get a tattoo you can't be buried in a Jewish cemetery." Some of what we know is actually true, and other things are "fake news"! Which "common knowledge" statements are really just common misconceptions? Come join us and find out. Many of the topics we explore will come from your ideas and suggestions.

## Did They Do the Right Thing?

### Analyzing Halachah in Historical Situations

RAV ELI WAGNER

Ever been to Masada and learned about the mass suicide? What about the false messiah, Shabtai Zvi, who convinced thousands of Jews that he was the "real thing"? (For that matter, when the "real thing" does arrive, how *will* we be sure?) If you fall in love with an Ethiopian, can you marry him – where did he come from? What is his history and halachic status? Have you ever learned



about a fascinating episode in history and thought, "What would I do in that situation?" or "What would the Torah want me to do?" Often, when learning about either history or *halachah*, we focus solely on one and neglect the other. Each week in this course, we will choose a significant event in our history and analyze a halachic challenge it presents (including episodes nominated by participants in the course). The skills gained and lessons learned through our analysis of each topic will allow us to put ourselves in the shoes of Jews through the ages and view history and *halachah* in a new light.



## Bottom-Line Halachah

RAV YITZ LERNER

What do I look for when buying a מזוזה? What exactly is everyone saying under the chuppah? Who can marry a כהן? What do I do first when I wake up in the morning? What happens at a Brit, and what am I supposed to say at each point? What are the

different parts of a funeral, and what is my role there and in a house of mourning? We will look at halachic topics with a focus on the “bottom line.” Rather than looking at many different sources, we will move quickly through topics to get to practical, bottom-line halachic know-how. [Extra sources will be available for independent study for interested students.]



## What’s a Jew Supposed to Do

RAV ELI WAGNER

What do I do if I’m in the middle of Shemoneh Esrei and suddenly everyone’s saying “Kadosh kadosh kadosh”? Do I really need to “hop” three times at the end of Shemoneh Esrei? Can I eat breakfast on Shabbat, or do I need to first make Kiddush? Sushi contains rice (mezonot), but the main thing in it is fish (shehakol) or vegetables (ha-adamah) – so what berachah do I make? Potatoes are pareve, but do the fries from Burgers Bar make you meat anyway? Why is Israeli Kashrut SOOOO confusing, and how do I navigate the added factor of Shemitah this year? When I do netilat yadayim, do I wash each hand twice or three times (and why isn’t once enough?), and do I make the berachah before washing, while washing or while drying off? Judaism’s laws guide our lives, and there’s a lot to know. You may have been doing things all your life, but now’s your chance to fill in all your blanks. In this course, we will learn how to apply the most common halachot we face on a daily basis.

## The Jewish Life Cycle: Childhood

RAV JASON KNAPEL

Mazel tov, it’s a boy – now how do I choose a *mohel* and decide whom to honor with various roles at the *brit milah*? What do people do when a girl is born, and why isn’t there a (surgery-free!) female parallel

to the *brit milah*? What should I take into account in choosing a name for my newborn child? Ever wonder what’s really going on at a *pidyon ha-ben*, especially why people put jewelry around the baby, and is there really an option to let the *kohen* keep your child? How can you make a bar mitzvah more meaningful than just *leining* the parshah, and how can you make a bat mitzvah more than a tweens party with a cute theme? How can you do your best at the incredible mitzvah of chinuch, raising your children to be committed, passionate, knowledgeable Jews? As young children begin to consciously interact with their parents, and then as we grow into teens and adults, what are our *kibud av ve-em* responsibilities beyond a vague sense of being respectful? In this course, we will explore the reasons, *halachot* and *minhagim* of all the major life-cycle events so that when they happen to you, you will know what and why we Jews do what we do!



## Women in Jewish Law

BRACHA KROHN

What does Judaism have to say about relationships between the sexes? Does Judaism believe in platonic friendships? Is “being *shomer*” a real *halachah*, and does anyone really observe it? What is “*yichud*,” and when do we have to worry about it? Are elevators and deserted parks considered *yichud*? Why do some married women wear kerchiefs practically to their eyebrows, while others show much more hair? Can a woman make *kiddush* for everyone at the whole Shabbat table? Which *tefilot* is a woman obligated to *daven*? Can women be rabbis? Can they “*lain*” the Torah? Are men really not allowed to hear women sing, no matter what song or tune it is? When and why do we need a *mechitzah*? Can women say *kaddish* in front of men? Why do some women enthusiastically learn *Gemara*, while others shy away? In this one-semester course, we will see the sources behind these interesting,





important and very relevant *halachot*. You will finally know why you do what you do (and what you have to do) and what everyone is talking about. Lively discussions and debates await us as we answer these questions and more.

## Har Sinai in Emunah and Halachah

RAV ELI WAGNER

Ever wonder what really happened at Har Sinai – besides being pretty terrifying, what was it like to



experience God appearing right before us? How do we know the whole thing really took place? If we were all there, as tradition tells us, why don't we remember anything? How could an entire nation of laypeople, few of them trained as prophets, many of them just children,

spontaneously become prophets? If the whole thing was so impressive, how could our ancestors turn back to idol worship just forty days later? Turning to the content of what was said at Sinai, why were these ten commandments chosen out of all 613? (Would you have chosen "Do not covet your neighbor's house"?) What does it mean to believe in God ("I am God...")? Is abortion categorized as murder ("Do not kill...")? Can adultery ever be justified ("Do not commit adultery...")? What is the Torah's view on illegally downloading music and movies – is it stealing ("Do not steal...")? Can God command us to feel certain emotions ("Do not envy...")? In this course, we will explore the significance and relevance of the Sinai experience and the importance of the Ten Commandments as a unit and individually, both hashkafically and halachically.

## Halachic World

RAV RAFI ROSENBLUM

Is there anything wrong with going to a magic show? What do I do (if anything) if I have a bad dream? Can I go into a church? How about a mosque? Can someone with a tattoo be buried in a Jewish cemetery? What should I do if I am traveling and I want to eat bread, but I don't have water? What if there is a sink, but I don't have a cup? Can a woman



shoot a gun? Can a man look in a mirror? Can I gamble? If I wanted to go skydiving (sounds amazing), would there be anything wrong with that? What about skiing? What can I do before davening in the morning? Can I go for a jog? What about checking my email and messages? If you are interested in learning more about these topics and other similar topics, this course is for you. We will cover a different topic every class by looking at the primary sources and then looking at some of the contemporary sources.

## Ask the Rabbi: "עשה לך רב"

RAV JASON KNAPEL

Join in each week for a freewheeling, every-question-goes extravaganza! Each week, we'll meet to discuss your questions on anything and everything. We'll devote part of each class to answering your pre-submitted-via-WhatsApp questions (enabling Rav Jason to research them); part to discussing questions from people all around the world; and part to handling the questions that come to you during the class itself. This is the time to clear up all those questions you've always wanted to ask...





## Ask the Rabbi

RAV YY WENGLIN

Join in each week for a freewheeling, every-question-goes extravaganza! Each week, we'll meet to discuss your questions on anything and everything. We'll devote part of each shiur to answering your pre-submitted questions; part to discussing questions from people all around the world; and part to handling the questions that come to you during the shiur itself. This is the time to clear up all those questions you've always wanted to ask...

## Reason for the Season

RAV ELI WAGNER / SHANA BET

We're taught to eat symbolic foods on *Rosh Ha-Shanah* – honey so that we'll have a sweet year,



pomegranate seeds so that we'll have plentiful *mitzvot* this year... beets, fish heads, the list goes on and on. But isn't it just superstition to think that eating certain foods will somehow change our future? Besides actual repentance, the *Yom Kippur* season also seems to bring

amazing "repentance shortcuts" which achieve forgiveness with much less work – "*tashlich*" leaves our sins at the bottom of a lake, "*kapparot*" transfers our sins to a chicken of our choosing... do these methods work, and if so, how and why? What does authentic atonement look like on *Yom Kippur*, and why should it work if we go back to our routines the next day? Is there any connection between the *mitzvot* of *lulav* and *sukkah*, or do they just happen to share the same holiday? On *Chanukkah*, we celebrate our victory over the "Hellenized" Jews,

who believed in mixing together Torah and the contributions of other cultures – but isn't that pretty much who we are too? What's with the drinking controversy that surrounds *Purim*? The holidays are much more than family reunions. There is a reason why we celebrate, when we celebrate and how we celebrate. This course will clarify our *halachot* and *minhagim* and their hashkafic implications.

## Shiviti Hashem

SEPHA KIRSHBLUM / SHANA BET

No one person can actually keep all 613 mitzvot – some are just for kohanim, others just for kings, and so on; and even the mitzvot we can keep, we perform only whenever they actually come up, which tends to be now and then, here and there. But there are a unique few mitzvot that we can do every second of our lives, commandments



which should be constantly on our minds and help us stay always focused on God. What are these mitzvot, and why were these special few chosen from all the others? Since these mitzvot address our hearts and minds, we must ask: How can we be commanded to have (or not have) certain thoughts and feelings? We will learn all about these mitzvot, how to keep them, and how their significance can enhance our everyday lives.





# תורה שבאל פה

## Introduction to Gemara

RAV JASON KNAPEL



Have you ever wanted to open up a *Gemara* to find out what it's all about, but thought it would be too hard or out of your comfort zone? In this course, we will become familiar with the text of the *Gemara*, as we also learn how to think like the *Gemara*, the backbone of all of *Torah She-be-al Peh*. We will be touching on topics that affect our daily Jewish lives.

into tax law), from philosophy to phrenology (now I am kidding, go Google that), from relationships to real estate. Much more than just understanding the *Gemara* text, we will get inside the brilliant minds of the people who built our whole system and try to follow their thought processes – what made them each think what they thought, why they disagree when they do. As we improve our textual skills, we will also learn how to ask the right key questions when approaching a new topic; how to make meaningful analytical distinctions; and how to brainstorm creative solutions to challenging problems.

## Advanced Gemara

RAV EITAN MAYER



Looking for a great way to become a clearer thinker, a more creative problem-solver, a more skilled pattern-recognizer (I know that's not really a word), and a better analyst of any problem you'll face for the rest of your life? Well, keep dreaming! Just kidding – the place to find all those things is in the world of Advanced Gemara, designed for those with Gemara background but open to anyone looking for a real intellectual challenge in the world of Torah. As we successfully build thinking skills, you'll see you can use those skills on everything else too, from Tanach to taxes (I kid you not, tons of Gemara learners go



## Midrash of the Week

RAV ZVI RON

How did No'ach manage to feed all of those animals on the Ark? Who was his wife, the mysterious Mrs. No'ach? Did the Flood really cover the entire world? Why was Eisav so hairy? Why do Chazal think that blessings only work on hidden things? What is the secret reason for sneezing? How did Moshe find the secret spot where Yosef was buried in Egypt? Every week, we will learn classic and not yet classic midrashim related to the parshah. The source material for all Torah commentaries and divrei Torah is right here! We will study the midrashim together

and extract the insights and lessons encoded within. All of your midrash questions answered and lessons learned!

## Masechet “Derech Eretz”

RAV ZVI RON

If your friend is going around badmouthing you behind your back, how should you handle it? How



can you make and maintain a connection with a Torah teacher? How can you be so talented that people constantly seek your help, yet still be humble?

What deep psychological truths do you need to know about yourself in order to do the right thing and keep doing it? Chazal gathered many of these lessons into a collection called “Masechet Derech Eretz” (kind of like the Pirkei Avot of the rabbis of the Gemara). Join us as Chazal describe and debate the proper way of life for a Jew.

## Role Models and Rogues in Chazal

NEIMA NOVETSKY

Wanted by the Roman police, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai spent years hiding in a cave, learning Torah all



day, and when it was finally time to leave, making the transition back to the real world was far from simple. What can his experience teach us about living in and then leaving the “seminary bubble?” When you really need something in life, is it

OK to give God an ultimatum or even throw an “adult tantrum,” as the famous Choni Ha-Me’agel did, or must we face Hashem meekly and humbly? Reading the news these days, we’ve all heard stories about rabbis making some very human mistakes or even committing crimes. If a rabbi “goes off the *derech*” and no longer serves as an example of behavior one should emulate, must we also reject him as a teacher – after all, we don’t need philosophy professors to follow the philosophies they teach, and we don’t need to like an artist to appreciate his paintings? If

he was brilliant and insightful and wrote books full of fantastic Torah, can we still learn that Torah, or must we reject his Torah along with him? What could make a rabbi walk away from his faith anyway? When faced with setbacks, R. Akiva often said, “It’s all for the best”; but is that always the right attitude? When should I put my trust in Hashem and accept my reality as Hashem’s will, and when do I say, “I need to put in more *hishtadlut* (personal effort) and change my reality”? Each week, this class will focus on a different figure from Chazal, looking at a selection of stories from their lives and the messages we can learn from them.

## Chazal on Self-Awareness

RAV AVINOAM DURANI

Chazal often talk about the “*yetzer ha-ra*” like it’s a force outside us – is it some kind of evil spirit, or is it

really a part of us ourselves? Taking a year-long break from life to just learn Torah, it’s time to wonder: what’s more important in life and Judaism, doing or learning? Do we have really have angels around us all the time,



as Chazal say, or did they mean something less literal? Is everything in the hands of Heaven, as Chazal say – don’t they also say we should not trust in miracles? How can suffering be more than an obstacle and a negative, perhaps even an important step in our our success? Each of these questions is the focus of a short story or saying in the “*Agadot*” of the Talmud, where Chazal offer us advice and perspective on life, ourselves, and Hashem. In this course, we will dive into Chazal’s observations on the beautiful and complex relationships between people and God, society, nature, and the self. We will aim to reach a higher level of self-awareness, the ability to take an honest look at your life. We will learn to assess whether our actions, thoughts, and emotions align with our internal standards in order to help us reach our full potential.

**TIP:** Think of your initial schedule as just your “rough draft” of what to try out first. You can log in and make changes every night! You don’t know the teachers yet, and your goals for the year are still developing. So when learning begins, come with an open mind, ready to **make switches**.



## Pirkei Avot

MALKA HUBSCHER

The moral lessons, profound psychological insights, and philosophical teachings of the *Tanna'im*, the



rabbis who composed the *Mishnah* almost 2,000 years ago, remain immediately relevant and deeply meaningful today. We will use them as a

guide to inspire us to reach new heights in both our *avodat Hashem* and *midot ben adam la-chavero*.

## Pirkei Avot: Perek 1-2

RAV RAFI ROSENBLUM

Pirkei Avot is where the sages of the *Mishnah* from 2,000 years ago – giants like Hillel and Shammai, Rabbi Akiva and Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai –



communicate directly and personally with each one of us, guiding us in our efforts to try to become the best people we can be. *Pirkei Avot* allows these usually halachic figures to express themselves on more personal topics, such

as *midot* and the methods that we need to perfect them. Because each brief *mishnah* offers a different area of focus, there is no shortage of topics to cover, and as an added bonus, we will go straight from the start to the end, giving us the opportunity to complete an entire *sefer*.

## Pirkei Avot in Tanach

SEPHA KIRSHBLUM

Each time we meet, we will begin with a few lines from *Pirkei Avot* and then learn a story in Tanach which illustrates and deepens the message of the *Mishnah*. We will learn stories from Tanach and see how each story brings to life the lessons of the *Mishnah* and the ideals by which we should shape our own personal lives today.



## Deep Thoughts on the Chagim

RAV JASON KNAPEL

What is the real meaning behind the sound of the

Shofar? Why do we sometimes say the whole Hallel, and other times just part of it? What is the hidden meaning behind the lighting of the Menorah? Is it a mitzvah to get drunk on Purim, and if so, why? In today's day and age, why do we



still "lean" at the Seder to show freedom? Through deep analysis of the traditional sources, we will not only understand the halachah, but also the philosophical background of the chagim and how the very details of the halachah help connect us with the spirit of the day.









# INSPIRATION

## The Simchah Seminar

RAV KALMAN FLAKS

Want to be happier? What you're looking for is "simchah," which really means "happiness" or "contentment" or "satisfaction" or "fulfillment."



People sometimes translate it as "joy" or "celebration," but those are for special occasions. What about our every day? We will look for "simchah" in unexpected places, finding it – or placing it – into

many things we do all the time: How can we find simchah in everyday eating? (Hint: it's not about only the most delicious or most luxurious foods...) Would you believe there is simchah in physical exercise, even if you're not winning? How can we find simchah in the mitzvot we do all the time, which don't always seem overly fun? Is there a deeper level of simchah to be found in dancing, in addition to its just plain being fun and social? You're not going to believe it, but paradoxically, we can even find simchah in... being sad! The Simchah Seminar aims to give you practical tools to live a more fulfilling Jewish life and to pass that simchah on to others! More than a regular course, our meetings will help form a group of peers dedicated to supporting one other's growth through the best of mussar, chasidut and positive psychology. This class won't deliver if you're just looking for an inspirational shiur: each class will have a practical 'homework mission,' like eating with consciousness, weekly exercise or blessing with super kavanah. Join us if you're willing to work to achieve simchah!

**TIP:** "Late CnC" at 9:30pm is for the "shtark" and the night owls.

## Living in the Presence of Hashem

RAV JONNY FRIEDMAN

There's nothing more physical than eating, which explains why we don't eat on super-spiritual days like Yom Kippur, right?

On second thought, eating *can* be spiritual, since it enables us to serve Hashem with energy. But can the act of eating *itself* be a way of serving Hashem, right then and there as we eat? Do we sleep just because we're tired (or love



napping), or there is also a way to sleep like a Jew? Does "simchah" mean literally being ecstatic all the time? And why is simchah so vital to our relationship with Hashem? We all have physical desires with which we struggle throughout our lives, either to resist forbidden desires or to minimize desires for things which are permitted but distract us from what's important. How do we build the strength to beat these urges? This course will engage topics like these in real-life spirituality, helping us to build a life of kedushah and inspiration.

## Lives of our Gedolim

RAV HANOCH TELLER

Quick – can you name ten social media influencers or Youtube stars or Tik-Tokkers who are hot right now? Great! Now – can you name five *Gedolei Ha-Dor* (great rabbinic leaders) since 1980? If you had an easier time with the first question than with the second, we need to talk about your "influencers"! What happens when your parents are pushing you one way, and you believe that God is wishing you a different way? How do you know what you should really be looking for in a husband, and the qualities



to avoid no matter what? What do you do if your roommate is selfish, but if you try and correct her, she will say bad things about you? What do you do if you see a student taking “liberties” with school property, say something (and to whom?) or mind your own business? There isn’t a facet of life, from controlling your anger to how to concentrate better in davening – with every dilemma above thrown in, that has not been illuminated by our contemporary *Gedolim*. Join us to learn from the lives of *Gedolim* and benefit from their deep wisdom, long experience and vast Torah knowledge.

## Building Bitachon

RAV ELIE WAGNER

Just because you believe God exists doesn’t mean you have a great ongoing relationship with Him. One



of the main keys to any relationship is trust, or “*bitachon*.” How do you build trust in Hashem? In the fascinating sefer, “*Be-Emunato Yichyeh*,” Rav Shlomo Wolbe shows the way. Trust, Rav Wolbe explains, is not just something you have or don’t have – it’s

actually a *midah*, just like all of our other *midot*. That means there are things you can do to build it – or damage it – and it means that it interacts with all of a person’s other *midot*. How do our *midot* of humility, anger, desire and others affect our trust in Hashem? Which of our *midot* nourish and fertilize *bitachon*, and which others corrode and poison it? At first thought, we think of *mitzvot* as activities we do to express our faith in Hashem; but on second thought, Rav Wolbe teaches, there are many *mitzvot* which nurture our *bitachon* and help sustain it and deepen it. Which *mitzvot* are they? Join us to learn more about *bitachon* so that you can use it to strengthen your connection to Hashem.

## Life Advice from Rabbi Nachman

RAV YONATON HIRSCHHORN

“That was a-MA-zing!” You just went to an amazing class, and you’re feeling so inspired, but then you realize you don’t really know how to apply this fleeting spark of inspiration to your daily life. Many of us know what we want from our lives, but we aren’t sure just how to get there. Wouldn’t it be amazing if there were a book of practical advice on how to become the best version of yourself? When things in my life are going wrong and I’m feeling low, how can I get inspiration from Hashem? Shemoneh Esrei feels like someone else’s words, and I feel nothing when I say it; how can I achieve real, personal, passionate communication with Hashem? Since I know Hashem won’t give me everything I want, what does it mean to “trust” in Hashem? How can I feel real joy and pride in my religious life? Rabbi Nachman of Breslov composed a whole sefer of practical advice on how to live an inspired life, how to build those moments of inspiration and connection into our everyday routine – “*Likutei Eitzot*.” Join us for Rabbi Nachman’s deep, inspiring advice on so many topics relevant to us today.



## Shirah Chadashah

MICHAEL PORATH ZIBMAN

Have you ever sat through a beautiful *kumtitz*, *tisch*, or *se’udah shelishit* and been inspired by the beautiful singing? Found yourself swaying back and forth with your eyes closed... and then realized that you are n’t exactly sure what those words mean... and you’re not even sure what the words *are*? Some of the most meaningful experiences we have throughout the year in Israel and later on come from singing Jewish songs together. Join us as we explore a different song each week, learning to understand what the words mean and delving into the greater context of where these





words appear. Through midrashic, chasidic, Chazal, and contemporary sources, we will arrive at a better appreciation of the songs we sing and a greater understanding of song as its own unique approach in avodat Hashem.

## The Joy of Being a Jew (“JOBAJ”)

RABBI YY WENGLIN / TWO SECTIONS TO CHOOSE FROM 



Let’s face it: It’s simply more exciting to go to a concert or a ballgame or a party than it is to *daven Shacharit*. Or to take *challah*. Or to keep *Shabbos*. Or to... You get the point. In this course, we will start with some basics of

Jewish *hashkafah* and then progress to deeper ideas of *Kabbalah/Chassidus* to help us understand ourselves and our relationship with Hashem. We will gradually learn to look at the world as a place filled with His holiness and wisdom, one-hundred percent suited for intense closeness and attachment to Him. Anticipated topics include truth, our deep desires in life, self-esteem, spiritual reality, emotions, *davening*, *Shabbos*, and much more. Once a Jew more fully appreciates and internalizes deeper ideas in Judaism, her joy from being Jewish increases proportionately. Who knows, you might even walk away from this course knowing how to make an “*asher yatzar*” with the same *simchah* and passion as if you had won America Idol!

## Connecting to Your Tefilah

RAV YONATON HIRSCHHORN

Many people view prayer like an ATM – punch in the right combination, and “boom,” whatever I ask for



comes right out. It’s nice... but what happens when your credit runs out? You keep going through the motions, but nothing happens. Does this feel familiar? Would you like to see tefilah as something more than a cold, sad ATM, a place to make withdrawals? Our holy

Kabbalists taught that “tefilah” comes from the Hebrew word “*petil*,” a thread which connects. The siddur is a map showing us the way to find God; if your tefilot are a means of connection, you will find Hashem waiting on the other side! In this course, we will learn how to connect to our tefilot, to see the true value of the siddur and why it was composed. Join us to connect to Hashem in a personal, loving and beautiful way.

## Messages of the Chagim

RAV EFRONI SCHLESINGER

Every year, the “Day of Judgment,” Rosh Ha-Shanah, comes before the Day of Repentance, Yom Kippur.

But isn’t that exactly backwards – shouldn’t we ask for forgiveness before Hashem decides our fate for the year, rather than doing nothing before the judgment and then trying to change it afterward? Shabbat is a commemoration of how God created the



world in six days and rested on the seventh. Why couldn’t (or didn’t) God create the world in one day, or one instant? And why does He need to rest at all? Most holidays are celebrated on the day some important thing happened. But since Sukkot commemorates how God protected us in the desert for forty years, why celebrate specifically on the 15th of Nissan? The Midrash tells us that in the Messianic Era, all holidays will be canceled except Yom Kippur and Purim. Why would Purim, a holiday created by the rabbis way after the Torah was given, outlast the “Shalosh Regalim” or Rosh Ha-Shanah, which were commanded by God Himself? Join us to explore these questions and many more, as we understand the dynamics of the Chagim we know so well but which always have more to teach us.

## Growth Instruction Manual

RABBI YITZCHAK LERNER

The seminary year is focused on learning and growth – in our relationship with Hashem, with other people, and in our own selfhood. Often, however, it doesn’t seem self-explanatory how that growth is supposed to happen. Some examples:

- My friend seems to make such a connection when she prays. Why am I not feeling it, and how can I connect like she does?
- A year of growth is great, but it also makes me more conscious than ever of all of my imperfections and inadequacies. How do I figure out where I need to grow without coming away feeling depressed and low?
- I feel like I'm a nice person, but I get the sense that somehow, I project NOT being super nice. How can I come across to others the same way I feel inside?
- *Halachah* seems so demanding. Does God really care about all of these details?
- My sister/cousin/friend was a superstar in seminary and came back "amazing." How can I make that happen for me?
- I really want to grow, but I don't want everyone (friends / family) thinking I'm "so frum." How do I stay balanced? How do I explain myself to them? And how do I keep this growth going?

If these are some of your questions, this course may help you. Every week, we will study a fresh text from a contemporary rabbi addressing these issues. We will include pieces from Michtav Me-Eliyahu, Netivot Shalom, Rav Pinkus, Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz, and many more, to inspire us each week and guide us through this transformational year.



## Knocking on Heaven's Door

RABBI YAAKOV YISROEL WENGLIN

Three steps back, three steps forward. Bow... Bow... Potch. Potch... Yawn, yawn, yawn. Bow... Bow... Three steps back. Again. Three steps back. Three



steps forward. Bow... Bow... Potch. Potch... Yaaaaawwwwn. "—Wait, where am I? Oh, right...." Bow... Bow... Three steps back. Again... Every day. For the rest of your life. If this captures your prayer experience, then this course may be for you. We will look to change the game completely by learning about *davening* from the basic to the deep, drawing from select Chasidic and Kabbalah-based sources. In addition to regular *shiurim*, the course will sometimes be more of a workshop, using tools of group discussion, writing, role-playing, and meditation exercises to help you experientially internalize the information we learn. In the process of changing the *davening* experience, the course aims to also change the way you experience *yourself*, both in terms of your self-identification and your *midot* (character traits). But a bit of a warning: This course is for mature audiences only. The ideal student for this course is one who is focused and growth-oriented, willing to contemplate new ideas, to participate in the exercises and discussions, and in general, to increase her connection to Judaism and Hashem. If you take this course, after all is said and done, you might actually not be in such a hurry to take those last three steps back!

## Netivot Shalom

RAV JASON KNAPEL



Thousands of young people come to Israel every year seeking to connect: to connect to *Eretz Yisrael*, to *Am Yisrael*, to *Medinat Yisrael*, or to Torah or to new friends... the list goes on. But the year in Israel is a time to look not only outside, but also deep within, a year to truly study and discover yourself,



searching the depth of your personality and thinking clearly about your connection to Hashem and Judaism. We will use the truly inspirational Netivot Shalom, written by the Rebbe of Slonim, to illuminate our path toward these goals.

**TIP:** Think frequently about whether to change your schedule as your goals and learning level change.



## Alei Shur: The “Bat Torah”

MICHAL PORATH-ZIBMAN

We will study the inspiring teachings of one of the greatest giants of our generation, Rav Shlomo



Wolbe. Rav Wolbe was renowned for being able to encourage and inspire Bnei and Bnot Torah to grow spiritually by first recognizing the reality of living in a material world and then providing them with advice and a roadmap on the journey of

elevating themselves. The ultimate goal is to enable us as “*avdei Hashem*” to become more introspective about our service of Hashem.

## Alei Shur

RAV RAFI ROSENBLUM

What are the most important building blocks in creating a Jewish home? Just like there are many



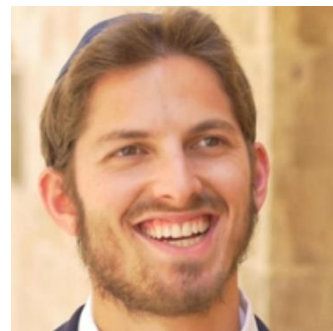
levels of *tzedakah* (e.g., better to teach someone to support herself than to just give her money), the same is true of *chesed*. All *chesed* is good, but what are the best kinds?

Seminary enables us to accomplish in just one year of learning and growing what many of us didn’t or couldn’t in all the years before – but when seminary comes to an end, how do we take all of those precious gifts with us instead of letting them fade away? How can we use positive peer pressure to surround ourselves with a “*chevrah*” that brings out our best? Alei Shur was written by Rav Shlomo Wolbe as a guide for yeshiva students, but it has turned into a classic work of *mussar* for people of all ages and genders. This book is for people who feel motivated to work on improving themselves.

## Life-Changing Rashis and Rambans

RAV JONNY FRIEDMAN

Yosef has been gone for decades, missing in action and presumed dead. So when he decides to reveal himself and needs to make his father Yaakov believe he is actually still alive, why does he send



wagons to his father – what do they mean? After Yaakov wrestled with (and beat!) the angel, why was the angel so reluctant to reveal his name to Yaakov? When Hashem first appeared to Moshe, why was it specifically in a thorn bush, of all things? We often hear, “*ma’aseh avot siman la-banim*,” that events which occur in the lives of the Avot are similar to events which will occur to their descendants. But why, and what does this mean? We’ve all heard someone mention a “famous” Rashi or Ramban that we are all supposed to know... but it wasn’t famous to us! If that’s you, this class is for you! Of all the commentators, Rashi and Ramban are most known for the most crucial interpretations, ones which shape not only the way we understand a certain pasuk, but which serve as indispensable foundations for Jewish values and Jewish life. Join us to extract deep meaning which will impact our lives today!

## Shiviti Hashem

SEPHA KIRSHBLUM / SHANA BET

No one person can actually keep all 613 mitzvot – some are just for kohanim, others just for kings, and

so on; and even the mitzvot we can keep, we perform only whenever they actually come up, which tends to be now and then, here and there. But there are a unique few mitzvot that we can do every second of our lives, commandments



which should be constantly on our minds and help us stay always focused on God. What are these mitzvot, and why were these special few chosen from all the others? Since these mitzvot address our hearts and minds, we must ask: How can we be commanded to have (or not have) certain thoughts and feelings? We

will learn all about these mitzvot, how to keep them, and how their significance can enhance our everyday lives.

## Netivot Shalom

RAV YITZCHAK LERNER / SHANA BET

How does one work practically on *emunah* in Hashem and *Yirat Shamayim*? What is *simchas ha-chaim* and how does one achieve it? What steps can I take to improve my *tefilah*? Using “Netivot Shalom”, by Rabbi Shalom Noach Brozovsky, the Slonimer Rebbe, we will gain insight into the weekly *parshah* and *chagim* and take personal lessons from his work. We will explore ideas ranging from belief in God to self-improvement.



roots of avodat Hashem are in VaYikra. Together, we will reveal those roots and use them to connect with Hashem in our own lives.

## “Hashem Wants the Heart” The Torah of Chasidut

RABBI YAAKOV YISROEL WENGLIN / SHANA BET

We all know that ideally, we want to do everything in life with a full heart. Yeah, go ahead and say it: “With all of our heart and soul!” We want to be “into it” when we do things in life, whether we’re talking about marriage or children or career or personal growth or acts of kindness or even just chilling out. And, of course, we want to be fired up for Torah and *mitzvot*. And it all starts (and ends) with your heart. In this course, we will learn some classic Torah from the world of Chasidut to help us give Hashem what He wants from us – our hearts.



## The Roots of Avodat Hashem

RAV YONATON HIRSCHHORN / SHANA BET

Sefer VaYikra, with its focus on *korbanot*, *taharah*, and *kedushah*, is supposedly the most spiritual of the Chumashim. VaYikra would seem to be the place to go to learn how to live a spiritual life and get closer to Hashem. But does it still “work” for us today? Imagine actually bringing a *korban* – really imagine it. You buy a sheep, bring it on a leash to the Beit Ha-Mikdash, and watch as the *kohanim* slaughter it, do things with its blood, burn some parts of it and eat other parts. Feeling really spiritual? For us nowadays, animal sacrifice can seem like it belongs more in a butcher shop than in shul. Are we *supposed* to connect to *korbanot* nowadays, and can there be a deeper spiritual meaning to them, or were *korbanot* relatable only way back when? Join us to discover that the various *korbanot* are each different aspects of Avodat Hashem, that each *korban* is a model for how to build a our unique relationship with Him! The



## The Wisdom of Mishlei

BRACHA KROHN / SHANA BET

A special hour focusing on the wisdom in *Sefer Mishlei*, topic by topic. Each week, we will learn *pesukim* relating to a theme and discuss that issue’s relevance in our lives, looking at classic and contemporary sources. Shlomo ha-Melech’s insight will blow you away!





## Sefer Mishlei: Perek 1-11

RAV RAFI ROSENBLUM

*Mishlei* is unique among the 24 books of Tanach in that the majority of its *pesukim*, rather than being



individual pieces of a larger story or halachic section, are actually self-contained observations on life or pieces of advice all on their own. This means that the sefer is jam-packed with meaning, with every single *pasuk* its own new

world of ideas and reflections. It also means *Mishlei* can be a challenging *sefer*, since every *pasuk* stands on its own and requires analysis. Perhaps this should come as no surprise in *Mishlei*, since it was written by Shlomo Ha-Melech, the smartest person ever. Join us to increase your “wisdom quotient” and improve your character, exploring the messages that Shlomo is hinting to us across the centuries.

## Spiritual Insights in the Parshah

RAV YONATON HIRSCHHORN



Sometimes, especially when learning Chumash or Parshah for an upcoming test, we fall into the mentality that it’s basically just a book of history, or a book of do’s and don’ts. We don’t think of it as addressing our own lives in a deeper way. But if we

know how to listen, the Parshah can provide us with personal guidance and inspiration. The hidden gems in each parshah are waiting to be discovered by each generation, waiting with answers to our big questions. Together, we will dig below the surface facts of the stories in each parshah, read it anew, and find the spiritual insights which will illuminate our understanding and inspire us.



# SELF-IMPROVEMENT

## Learning from Mistakes

NEIMA NOVETSKY

Aharon Ha-Kohen appears to err pretty badly with the sin of the Golden Calf (Hashem has to be dissuaded from klling him!), yet he still merits to be the Kohen Gadol. Why? What about David and Batsheva – after apparently committing both adultery and murder, he still manages to remain both the king and the father of mashiach. How? Is



Shimon and Levi's reaction to Dina's rape in Shechem (yup, they massacre every man in town) an overreaction or a fair response? Yaakov appears to take advantage of Esav to buy the birthright. Why is that OK? This course will look at stories in Tanach where biblical figures appear to make mistakes and poor decisions or otherwise act improperly. Is it OK to say that our leaders made mistakes? How did they move beyond their errors, and how can we learn from them to do the same? As we study these stories and others, we'll look both at how our parshanim have understood them and what we can learn from them about our own shortcomings, how to correct them, and how to move forward after failure.

## Difficult Midot Situations / Breaking Bad Habits

RAV HANOCH TELLER

How can we stop assuming the worst of people and begin to judge them favorably? How can we handle difficult conversations with friends, parents, and roommates, sensitively making ourselves heard while also hearing others and finding ways to work

out tough issues? How can we waste less time? Be more thoughtful, considerate, appreciative, respectful, resilient, mature, and spiritual? How can we actualize our potential? This course will try to provide you with a significant edge in the struggle to be a better person and achieve success in life morally, professionally and socially.



## Finding Real Happiness

DR. AVIVA GOLDSTEIN

If you're pessimistic, were you just born that way and must live that way, or can optimism be learned? Feel like you sometimes have trouble handling adversity, and wondering whether you can find greater resilience? Looking for ways to be happier, more grateful, more satisfied with your life, and more empathetic to those around you? Most of



us think of psychology as the field that deals with problems and dysfunctions, and for a long time, that's what it was. But "Positive Psychology" is a new field dedicated not to neutralizing negatives, but to understanding the dynamics of well-being, happiness and life satisfaction. Scientists and psychologists have spent the last two decades making fascinating discoveries about the human brain and human emotions, with striking similarity to the writings of Judaism throughout millennia. We will discuss the definition of happiness, the implications of gratitude



and empathy, the impact of mindfulness, and how we can grow in self-awareness. We will explore individual character development through the prisms of both Torah and psychology in order to more fully achieve happiness and well-being in our daily lives.

## \*Intense\* Mesilat Yesharim

RAV EITAN MAYER

Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzato's "Path of the Righteous" is the first "*musar*" *sefer* I ever learned, and it



changed my life. More than anything else, this is a book that helps you to step back from your life and *think*. While many people who haven't learned "*musar*" think it means "rebuke" or "telling someone they've done the wrong thing," "*musar*" is really just the kind of learning

which is meant to impact us personally rather than just intellectually. *Mesilat Yesharim* begins by asking us what each of us personally is here for in this world, which is a startling question and a real wake-up call. The *sefer* continues by demonstrating the importance of taking time each day to think about "how we did" that day, what we're proud of and where we have work to do. It then presents a "path" (hence the title) which guides us as we seek to spend our time well here in this world. Join us for a highly practical, highly personal, highly intense journey towards stepping back from your life, reflecting, considering, focusing, and deciding on your path this year and for life as servants of Hashem.

## The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Jews

SEPHA KIRSHBLUM

All of us have habits which get in our way. We procrastinate work, errands, and phone calls; we say "yes" when people ask us for favors even when we should say "no"; sometimes FOMO keeps us up until crazy hours even when we know we'll be at less than our best the next day. What positive habits can we establish to replace our dysfunctional ones? Steven Covey, author of bestseller "The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People," teaches us about seven

habits he believes can help us develop into our best selves. For example: How to best listen to people; how to prioritize our time (including knowing when to say no); how to stop procrastinating and get things done; how to work best alone and with a team; and



how to always be seeking to improve ourselves and grow. In this course, we will learn these habits in detail from a Torah perspective, incorporating Jewish ethics and philosophy as well as the teachings of specific *mitzvot* that can help us fully develop these positive habits and become highly effective people and Jews.

## Building Great Relationships

DR. AVIVA GOLDSTEIN

How can I maximize my role as a daughter or step-daughter? What does friendship mean to me? What kind of spouse do I want to be, and what do I need to find in my own spouse? How do I imagine myself as a mother? What can I learn about my relationship with siblings, or from my only-child status? How can I nurture emotional intimacy



in a way that is empowering? What do I do once I recognize dysfunction in my relationships? What is the connection between my own self-awareness and self-confidence on one hand, and the health of the relationships in my life on the other hand? This course will be a journey through personal experiences, analysis of contemporary social research and immersion in relevant Jewish texts that can inform the social decisions in our lives. Reflecting on our own relationships and learning from sources, we will explore the universal undercurrents of human relationships and learn how to enhance our relationships and their impact on our lives. We will analyze communication and compatibility and recognize patterns in our own social experiences, and through a broad collection of Jewish texts and

psychology resources, we will seek a deep self-awareness and healthy, enriching relationships.

## Olam Ha-Midot

RAV YITZCHAK LERNER

Would you like to become a more truthful person? Achieve a more sincere level of motivation in everything you do? Do you wish you could be less jealous, leave anger behind, and more easily find fulfillment, calm, and happiness? Do you want to be more kind? Sefer “Olam Ha-Midot,” by Rav Moshe Kestenbaum (author of smash musar hit “Olam Ha-Avodah”) will help you get there. This sefer is all about refining your midot. Join us to challenge yourself to take things to the next level.



## Building Your Self-Confidence

BRACHA KROHN

Do you want to feel more empowered in your own life? Do you feel anxious, unsure, or overwhelmed at moments of transition or decision? Would you like to feel more positive, confident and effective in your day-to-day choices? Is it hard for you to put yourself first even when you know you should? Then this course is for you! We will learn the thoughts and tools needed to strengthen our confidence and self-esteem when life gets overwhelming, to put ourselves first when necessary, and to quiet the feelings of worry and anxiety that slow us down or hold us back. Learn the areas in our lives where we can bring change! You will learn about the value the Torah places on our need to make choices in life, be proactive and chart our own destinies. We will focus on the ways we can develop ourselves spiritually, emotionally and intellectually. Join us to learn about being independent in your Torah learning, forgiving yourself and others, navigating through challenges



that overwhelm you, choosing role models and mentors, finding and making meaningful friendships with people who bring out the best in you, and creating inspiration for yourself so you don't have to wait around for it! You will be happily surprised by the new-found independence, strength and confidence that you will begin to experience as we explore these topics and more. This is your ticket to a more successful YOU in all areas of your life... and to a more successful year, taking full advantage of all the opportunities that seminary offers.

## Tzniut on the Inside

RAV YONATON HIRSCHHORN

Sefer Mishlei, written by the smartest person ever, tells us that wisdom comes to those who are tzanu'a, or modest. But that seems so random – how can modesty bring us wisdom? While it can certainly be a hassle to wear long clothing in hot weather, did you know that tzniut can help protect us from a lot more than sunburn – shielding us from people's envy, and fending off people who might take what we have if they saw it? Paradoxically, although it begins with a beauty contest (which can hardly be called tzanu'a), did you realize that the whole Purim miracle centers on the idea of tzniut, with Esther hiding in plain sight? How can tzniut, which involves being subtle and not looking for the spotlight, help us find Hashem, who also stays hidden? In what ways are we supposed to be tzanu'a (and I'm not talking about dress!) when we do mitzvot, such as davening, learning Torah, giving tzedakah, getting married, and more – and why? What would it look like to do mitzvot in a tzanu'a / modest manner, and how would it help us be more sincere and focus on what's important? What is the connection between not showing off and building a deeper sense of self-esteem and dignity? Most discussions about tzniut (over-)focus on dress codes. But all those rules are literally only scratching the surface of tzniut (get it?), which is really much more than skin deep! Join us to have a deeper conversation about tzniut – not in dress, but in every aspect of what we do, the kind of modesty which would still exist even if we had no knees and elbows.





## Chazal on Self-Awareness

RAV AVINOAM DURANI

Chazal often talk about the “*yetzer ha-ra*” like it’s a force outside us – is it some kind of evil spirit, or is it really a part of us ourselves? Taking a year-long break from life to just learn Torah, it’s time to wonder: what’s more important in life and Judaism, doing or learning? Do we have really have angels around us all the time, as Chazal say, or did they mean something less literal? Is everything in the hands of Heaven, as Chazal say – don’t they also say we should not trust in miracles? How can suffering be more than an obstacle and a negative, perhaps even an important step in our our success? Each of these questions is the focus of a short story or saying in the “*Agadot*” of the Talmud, where Chazal offer us advice and perspective on life, ourselves, and Hashem. In this course, we will dive into Chazal’s observations on the beautiful and complex relationships between people and God, society, nature, and the self. We will aim to reach a higher level of self-awareness, the ability to take an honest look at your life. We will learn to assess whether our actions, thoughts, and emotions align with our internal standards in order to help us reach our full potential.



## Lives of our Gedolim

RAV HANOCH TELLER

Quick – can you name ten social media influencers or Youtube stars or Tik-Tokkers who are hot right now?



Great! Now – can you name five *Gedolei Ha-Dor* (great rabbinic leaders) since 1980? If you had an easier time with the first question than with the second, we need to talk about your “influencers”! What happens when your parents are pushing you one way, and you believe that

God is wishing you a different way? How do you know what you should really be looking for in a husband, and the qualities to avoid no matter what? What do you do if your roommate is selfish, but if you

try and correct her, she will say bad things about you? What do you do if you see a student taking “liberties” with school property, say something (and to whom?) or mind your own business? There isn’t a facet of life, from controlling your anger to how to concentrate better in davening – with every dilemma above thrown in, that has not been illuminated by our contemporary *Gedolim*. Join us to learn from the lives of *Gedolim* and benefit from their deep wisdom, long experience and vast Torah knowledge.

## Masechet “Derech Eretz”

RAV ZVI RON

If your friend is going around badmouthing you behind your back, how should you handle it? How can you make and maintain a connection with a Torah teacher? How can you be so talented that people constantly seek your help, yet still be humble? What deep psychological truths do you need to know about yourself in order to do the right thing and keep doing it? Chazal gathered many of these lessons into a collection called “*Masechet Derech Eretz*” (kind of like the *Pirkei Avot* of the rabbis of the Gemara). Join us as Chazal describe and debate the proper way of life for a Jew.



## Pirkei Avot

MALKA HUBSCHER

The moral lessons, profound psychological insights, and philosophical teachings of the *Tanna'im*, the rabbis who composed the *Mishnah* almost 2,000 years ago, remain immediately relevant and deeply meaningful today. We will use them as a guide to inspire us to reach new heights in both our *avodat Hashem* and *midot ben adam la-chavero*.



## Pirkei Avot: Perek 1-2

RAV RAFI ROSENBLUM

Pirkei Avot is where the sages of the *Mishnah* from 2,000 years ago – giants like Hillel and Shammai,



Rabbi Akiva and Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai – communicate directly and personally with each one of us, guiding us in our efforts to try to become the best people we can be. *Pirkei Avot* allows these usually halachic

figures to express themselves on more personal topics, such as *midot* and the methods that we need to perfect them. Because each brief *mishnah* offers a different area of focus, there is no shortage of topics to cover, and as an added bonus, we will go straight from the start to the end, giving us the opportunity to complete an entire *sefer*.

## Pirkei Avot in Tanach

SEPHA KIRSHBLUM

Each time we meet, we will begin with a few lines from *Pirkei Avot* and then learn a story in Tanach which illustrates and deepens the message of the *Mishnah*. We will learn stories from Tanach and see how each story brings to life the lessons of the *Mishnah* and the ideals by which we should shape our own personal lives today.



## Orchot Tzadikim: בין אדם לעצמו

BRACHA KROHN / MEETS SUN + TUE

Did you come to seminary to work on yourself? Before you work on your connections to other people and to Hashem, the foundation to build on is the *midot* that are about you yourself, “*bein adam le-*

*atzmo*.” Join us to learn from the life-changing *sefer*, *Orchot Tzadikim*, why we do what we do and how to do things differently. Do you want to learn how to balance self-esteem and confidence with humility, so you’ll know how to value yourself and your needs while still having quality relationships with family, friends and Hashem? If people say that you’re supposed to be “*be-simchah*” all the time (there’s even a song that says that), does that mean you can never be sad about anything? What are the things we think will make us happy but actually won’t, and what are the surprising things that actually do work? How do we get over laziness and get motivated to be more productive? Join us to learn essential skills and gain invaluable self-awareness so you can be successful in all of these areas *bein adam le-atzmo*. Once you’ve laid that foundation, you can choose to continue on next semester, focusing in Spring on *bein adam la-chavero* with *middot* such as anger, jealousy, generosity, and more.



## Netivot Shalom



RAV JASON KNAPEL

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## Role Models and Rogues in Chazal

NEIMA NOVETSKY

Wanted by the Roman police, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai spent years hiding in a cave, learning Torah all day, and when it was finally time to leave, making the transition back to the real world was far from simple.

What can his experience teach us about living in and then leaving the “seminary bubble?” When you really need something in life, is it



OK to give God an ultimatum or even throw an “adult tantrum,” as the famous Choni Ha-Me’agel did, or must we face Hashem meekly and humbly? Reading the news these days, we’ve all heard stories about rabbis making some very human mistakes or even committing crimes. If a rabbi “goes off the *derech*” and no longer serves as an example of behavior one should emulate, must we also reject him as a teacher – after all, we don’t need philosophy professors to follow the philosophies they teach, and we don’t need to like an artist to appreciate his paintings? If he was brilliant and insightful and wrote books full of fantastic Torah, can we still learn that Torah, or must we reject his Torah along with him? What could make a rabbi walk away from his faith anyway? When faced with setbacks, R. Akiva often said, “It’s all for the best”; but is that always the right attitude? When should I put my trust in Hashem and accept my reality as Hashem’s will, and when do I say, “I need to put in more *hishtadlut* (personal effort) and change my reality?” Each week, this class will focus on a different figure from Chazal, looking at a

selection of stories from their lives and the messages we can learn from them.

## The Simchah Seminar

RAV KALMAN FLAKS

Want to be happier? What you're looking for is "simchah," which really means "happiness" or "contentment" or "satisfaction" or "fulfillment."



People sometimes translate it as "joy" or "celebration," but those are for special occasions. What about our every day? We will look for "simchah" in unexpected places, finding it – or placing it – into

many things we do all the time: How can we find simchah in everyday eating? (Hint: it's not about only the most delicious or most luxurious foods...) Would you believe there is simchah in physical exercise, even if you're not winning? How can we find simchah in the mitzvot we do all the time, which don't always seem overly fun? Is there a deeper level of simchah to be found in dancing, in addition to its just plain being fun and social? You're not going to believe it, but paradoxically, we can even find simchah in... being sad! The Simchah Seminar aims to give you practical tools to live a more fulfilling Jewish life and to pass that simchah on to others! More than a regular course, our meetings will help form a group of peers dedicated to supporting one other's growth through the best of mussar, chasidut and positive psychology. This class won't deliver if you're just looking for an inspirational shiur: each class will have a practical 'homework mission,' like eating with consciousness, weekly exercise or blessing with super kavanah. Join us if you're willing to work to achieve simchah!

## Building Bitachon

RAV ELIE WAGNER

Just because you believe God exists doesn't mean you have a great ongoing relationship with Him. One of the main keys to any relationship is trust, or "*bitachon*." How do you build trust in Hashem? In the fascinating sefer, "*Be-Emunato Yichyeh*," Rav Shlomo Wolbe shows the way. Trust, Rav Wolbe

explains, is not just something you have or don't have – it's actually a *midah*, just like all of our other *midot*. That means there are things you can do to build it – or damage it – and it means that it interacts with all of a person's other *midot*. How do our *midot* of humility, anger, desire and others affect our trust in Hashem? Which of our *midot* nourish and fertilize *bitachon*, and which others corrode and poison it? At first thought, we think of *mitzvot* as activities we do to *express* our faith in Hashem; but on second thought, Rav Wolbe teaches, there are many *mitzvot* which nurture our *bitachon* and help sustain it and deepen it. Which mitzvot are they? Join us to learn more about *bitachon* so that you can use it to strengthen your connection to Hashem.



## Growth Instruction Manual

RABBI YITZCHAK LERNER

The seminary year is focused on learning and growth – in our relationship with Hashem, with other people, and in our own selfhood. Often, however, it doesn't seem self-explanatory how that growth is supposed to happen. Some examples:



- My friend seems to make such a connection when she prays. Why am I not feeling it, and how can I connect like she does?
- A year of growth is great, but it also makes me more conscious than ever of all of my imperfections and inadequacies. How do I figure out where I need to grow without coming away feeling depressed and low?
- I feel like I'm a nice person, but I get the sense that somehow, I project NOT being super nice. How can I come across to others the same way I feel inside?
- *Halachah* seems so demanding. Does God really care about all of these details?



- My sister/cousin/friend was a superstar in seminary and came back “amazing.” How can I make that happen for me?
- I really want to grow, but I don’t want everyone (friends / family) thinking I’m “so frum.” How do I stay balanced? How do I explain myself to them? And how do I keep this growth going?

If these are some of your questions, this course may help you. Every week, we will study a fresh text from a contemporary rabbi addressing these issues. We will include pieces from Michtav Me-Eliyahu, Netivot Shalom, Rav Pinkus, Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz, and many more, to inspire us each week and guide us through this transformational year.

**TIP:** This is *the* year to work on your tefilah and your basic knowledge of what’s in the Torah. Take at *least* one tefilah course which helps you understand what you’re saying and connect with it, and at *least* one parshah course so that you gain greater familiarity with the Torah.









# RELATIONSHIPS

## Building Great Relationships

DR. AVIVA GOLDSTEIN

How can I maximize my role as a daughter or step-daughter? What does friendship mean to me? What



kind of spouse do I want to be, and what do I need to find in my own spouse? How do I imagine myself as a mother? What can I learn about my relationship with siblings, or from my only-child status? How can I nurture emotional intimacy in a way that is

empowering? What do I do once I recognize dysfunction in my relationships? What is the connection between my own self-awareness and self-confidence on one hand, and the health of the relationships in my life on the other hand? This course will be a journey through personal experiences, analysis of contemporary social research and immersion in relevant Jewish texts that can inform the social decisions in our lives. Reflecting on our own relationships and learning from sources, we will explore the universal undercurrents of human relationships and learn how to enhance our relationships and their impact on our lives. We will analyze communication and compatibility and recognize patterns in our own social experiences, and through a broad collection of Jewish texts and psychology resources, we will seek a deep self-awareness and healthy, enriching relationships.

## Rav Soloveitchik on the Jewish Family

MALKA HUBSCHER

Want to improve your relationships with your siblings, parents or grandparents? Maybe already thinking about how to have a great marriage and

how to be a good mother? The time to become the person you would like to be... is now. The Jewish family has always been the backbone of our nation; family relationships define, shape and influence us throughout our entire lives. They can be very loving, positive and enriching, and at the same time complex and stressful. In this course, using Rav Soloveitchik's "Family Redeemed" and other selections from his writing, we will learn from this world-class *gadol*, modern philosopher, and deeply sensitive, sympathetic, and wise observer of human and Jewish nature how to improve the dynamics within our own families.



## Dysfunctional Families in Tanach

NEIMA NOVETSKY

We often look to Tanach for role models for how we should live our lives. When it comes to relationships, however, Tanach often seems to have many more examples of what we should not imitate than what we should – polygamy, fratricide (brothers killing each other), incest, rape, intermarriage – it's all there. How are we to understand all these dysfunctional relationships? Why does the *navi* Hoshe'a marry a prostitute? How can Yiftach offer his daughter as a sacrifice? What's up with Shimshon's falling for Philistine women, or



with angels marrying humans? How does the protective older sister Miriam become a jealous, gossiping sibling? Each week, this course will explore a different relationship and try to unravel what is going on and what we are supposed to learn from the story.

## Difficult Midot Situations / Breaking Bad Habits

RAV HANOKH TELLER

How can we stop assuming the worst of people and



begin to judge them favorably? How can we handle difficult conversations with friends, parents, and roommates, sensitively making ourselves heard while also hearing others and finding ways to work out tough issues? How can we waste less time? Be more

thoughtful, considerate, appreciative, respectful, resilient, mature, and spiritual? How can we actualize our potential? This course will try to provide you with a significant edge in the struggle to be a better person and achieve success in life morally, professionally and socially.

## Jewish Childhood and Parenthood

BRACHA KROHN

You are now at the age where you are reflecting on how you were raised and what values you received



from home. You might be thinking about how your parenting will be similar to, but also different from, your own parents' ways. As you move into adulthood, your relationship with your parents will change, which is both exciting and scary. If any of this

is on your mind, this course will be for you! We will learn about the issues of being children to our parents, and parents to our children, through topics such as:

- How do we define *kibud av ve-em*? How can we make sure to feel and express all the gratitude we feel (or should feel) for our parents? As children, how do we relate respectfully and lovingly to parents whose values differ from ours? Are there halachic requirements for parents about how to treat their children?
- In a multi-tasking world, how do we avoid being that parent who's always distracted? As children, how do we communicate what kind of attention we need from parents?
- As children, we hate when parents hover and micro-manage; as parents, we want our children to achieve independence from us and confidently face challenges on their own. How do we avoid the "helicopter parenting" that has become so widespread, which trains children to depend on parents and to experience anxiety when they face challenges alone? As children, how do we respectfully "declare our independence" when parents continue to do for us what we need to be ourselves?
- As children approach adulthood, parents naturally share more information with them. Some parents even think of their children as best friends, confide in them and depend on them for emotional support. But being a parent is different than being a friend, and sharing too much puts undue pressure on our children. How do we find the balance?
- How do we develop in our children gratitude, honesty, self-confidence, optimism, patience, empathy, humility, loyalty, persistence, resilience, tolerance, and many other qualities? How do we teach them to focus on the right things in life?

In each class, we will use Torah sources as well as contemporary psychology to help us clarify who we are as someone's child, and who we will be as someone's parent.

## Interpersonal Halachah

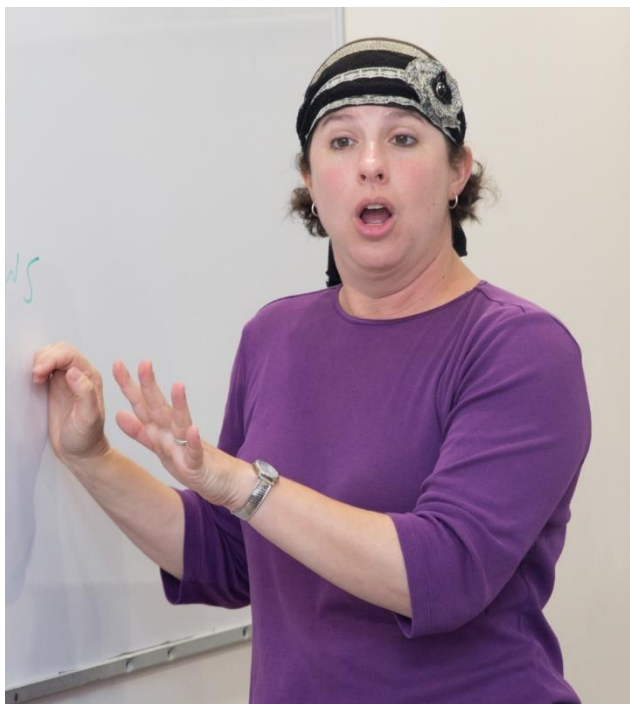
RAV RAFI ROSENBLUM

You've decided to daven at the Kotel every week. Amazing! The only problem is that every time you go there, you end up giving away a small fortune in *tzedakah* money. Are you obligated to give every single person





that asks for money? If so, how much must you give them? Can you lie and say you don't have any money? Is there ever a time that you are allowed to lie? Can I ever tell a friend that a mutual friend of ours has a lying problem? When can I tell someone something about someone, and when is it *lashon hara*? In this course, we will cover many of the *halachot* that come up in our daily interactions with other people.



## "Good Talk!"

BRACHA KROHN

Do you sometimes regret saying something? (Who doesn't!) Do you sometimes wish you *had* said something, and wonder why you didn't? Have you

ever wondered why someone else's words hurt you or matter so much to you? ("Sticks and stones might break my bones but names will never hurt me" – just not true, right?) In this course, we will discuss the power of speech and the way our words affect others and even ourselves. Going way beyond just "lashon ha-ra," we will learn about many different mitzvot that relate to speech and examine stories in Tanach where speech changed the course of history. If you want to feel inspired and motivated to use your words more kindly and responsibly, and feel stronger and less affected by others' destructive words, this course is for you! The learning we do each week will be relevant immediately and give you something to think about and work on until we see each other again.

## Masechet "Derech Eretz"

RAV ZVI RON

If your friend is going around badmouthing you behind your back, how should you handle it? How can you make and maintain a connection with a Torah teacher? How can you be so talented that people constantly seek your help, yet still be humble? What deep psychological truths do you need to know about yourself in order to do the right thing and keep doing it? Chazal gathered many of these lessons into a collection called "Masechet Derech Eretz" (kind of like the Pirkei Avot of the rabbis of the Gemara). Join us as Chazal describe and debate the proper way of life for a Jew.



# TEFILAH

## Meaning in Tefilah

MALKA HUBSCHER



Been *davening* for years, but never really sure of yourself? Sort of know what to say when, but not always? Or maybe you know what to do technically, but you're looking to enhance your *tefilot* by learning the theme of each *tefilah*. We will study the structure of the daily *tefilot*, the *halachot* of *tefilah*,

and methods to enhance *kavanah*.

## Tefilah GPS (Adv.)

RAV EITAN MAYER

When we pray, even if we know what the words mean (which, let's be honest, we often don't), we



don't always know where we're *going* with each *tefilah* (isn't this paragraph just more praise?) and what makes it unique. For example, everyone always says "*Ashrei*" is so special, but actually, it sounds a lot like everything else we say – so what's the big deal? What are we trying to say with

each "*hallelukah*" that makes it different than the one before and the one after? The *berachot* before and after *Shema* (*Yotzer Or*, *Ahavah Rabbah*, and *Ve-Yatziv*) are full of praise, but they seem to have nothing to do with each other, and nothing to do with *Shema*! Where are we going with all of this? What are we trying to say? How do we connect and

feel what we're saying on a deep and personal level? Naturally, if we lack a sense of where we are and where we're headed, we often feel disconnected and bored, which then chips away at our motivation to pray in the first place. We need a "Tefilah GPS"! In this textual course, we will carefully learn select *tefilot*, exploring their meaning, structure, and specific themes, so that we truly know what we're saying and can fill our words with meaning and connection. We will look at daily *tefilah* and *tefilot* we say on special occasions. (Bring a siddur with English please.)

## Connecting to Your Tefilah

RAV YONATON HIRSCHHORN

Many people view prayer like an ATM – punch in the right combination, and "boom," whatever I ask for comes right out. It's nice... but what

happens when your credit runs out? You keep going through the motions, but nothing happens. Does this feel familiar? Would you like to see tefilah as something more than a cold, sad ATM, a place to make



withdrawals? Our holy Kabbalists taught that "tefilah" comes from the Hebrew word "*petil*," a thread which connects. The siddur is a map showing us the way to find God; if your tefilot are a means of connection, you will find Hashem waiting on the other side! In this course, we will learn how to connect to our tefilot, to see the true value of the siddur and why it was composed. Join us to connect to Hashem in a personal, loving and beautiful way.



## Shemoneh Esrei

MICHAL PORATH ZIBMAN

We will engage in a deep study of the themes of the various *berachot* of the nineteen that we say daily.



By focusing on a different *berachah* every week, we will seek not only a better understanding of the meaning of the *berachot* themselves, but also to enhance our *kavanah* during this *tefilah*. In addition to *Shemoneh Esrei*, just as *tefilah* has been part of

the Jewish life experience since time immemorial, so too, people have written about the *tefilah* experience since then. Scholars and sages, from the early biblical commentators throughout Jewish history, Chasidic masters, and contemporary rabbis and community leaders, both men and women, have put their thoughts down for their generation and generations to come. We will examine some of these great works on *tefilah* and various specific *tefilot* in our *Siddur*, gaining ideas and insights each week that will enhance the way we serve Hashem.



## Knocking on Heaven's Door

RABBI YAAKOV YISROEL WENGLIN



Three steps back, three steps forward. Bow... Bow... Potch. Potch... Yawn, yawn, yawn. Bow... Bow... Three steps back. Again. Three steps back. Three steps forward. Bow... Bow... Potch. Potch... Yaaaaawwwwn. "—Wait, where am I? Oh, right...." Bow... Bow... Three steps back. Again... Every day. For the rest of your life. If this captures your prayer experience, then this course may be for you. We will look to change the game completely by learning about *davening* from the basic to the deep, drawing from select Chasidic and Kabbalah-based sources. In addition to regular *shiurim*, the course will

sometimes be more of a workshop, using tools of group discussion, writing, role-playing, and meditation exercises to help you experientially internalize the information we learn. In the process of changing the *davening* experience, the course aims to also change the way you experience *yourself*, both in terms of your self-identification and your *midot* (character traits). But a bit of a warning: This course is for mature audiences only. The ideal student for this course is one who is focused and growth-oriented, willing to contemplate new ideas, to participate in the exercises and discussions, and in general, to increase her connection to Judaism and Hashem. If you take this course, after all is said and done, you might actually not be in such a hurry to take those last three steps back!

## Sefer Tehilim

RAV YONATON HIRSCHHORN

When someone is sick, we start a *Tehilim* group. When someone needs a *shiduch*, we say *Tehilim* for her. When someone passes away, we say *Tehilim* at his or her grave. Why? When it's *Rosh Chodesh* or *chag*, we say – you guessed it – *Tehilim* again (in *Hallel*). For *Kabbalat Shabbat*, we say – yup – *Tehilim*. Even our daily *Pesukei De-Zimra* is composed of *Tehilim*. What makes this book so special? Why is it our go-to for the saddest and highest moments? Is it the identity of the author(s)? Is it the holiness of the book? Let's take a deep dive into every Jew's go-to *tefilah* book: Their words; our meaning; your inner song.



## Laws and Meaning of Tefilah

RABBI YITZCHAK LERNER

I really want *tefilah* to be part of my daily routine, but to be honest, I really don't know the meaning of what I'm saying and the rules which should guide me. Do women need to pray anything formal, or may they make do with just a few *berachot* each day? Do I need to say *Minchah*? When is the latest time I can still say *Shacharit* and *Minchah*? If I missed a *tefilah*, can I make it up? Do I answer "*amen*" or "*kedushah*" if I'm in the middle of another *tefilah*? Should I catch up during Torah reading, or listen to the reading? Is

there any difference whether I pray at home or with a *minyán*? If I'm late or fall behind, what can I skip in order to catch up? Is it better to say less but with more *kavanah*, or say everything I can? Can I take a jog before *tefilah*, or study for a test, or take the train, or have breakfast? The year in Israel is prime time to take your *tefilah* to the next level so that you can continue a strong connection with Hashem in college and beyond. Can there be any kind of real relationship without good communication? In addition to knowing what we're saying and learning how to focus, there is also a lot to know about the what, the when, the how, and the why of *tefilah*, and even if we've been "*davening*" for years, we still may not know. Join us to examine these questions and more, starting with *Modeh Ani* all the way to *Aleinu*.



## Tefilah: Meaning and Halachah

RAV RAFI ROSENBLUM / SHANA BET

You just woke up, you're starving, and you have a million things to do. But what activities are permitted before *tefilah* in the morning? Can you go for a jog? Does it matter if you can't concentrate without your morning coffee? At shul, you're in the middle of *davening* and someone asks you a question – can you answer? You finished your *Shemoneh Esrei* and you realize that you forgot "*Mashiv Ha-Ru'ach*" – what now? You've taken on *davening Minchah*, but you accidentally forgot today – is there anything to do? In this course, we'll cover the topics needed to answer these questions and many more, in addition to exploring the content of the *tefilot* themselves.



**TIP:** Have a schedule problem and not sure what to do? Come see Rav Eitan or Bracha and we'll sit down to solve it together!





# EMUNAH / BIG QUESTIONS

## Questions in Emunah

RAV ARI SHVAT

What is the goal of life? Why did God create the world? How does *tefilah* work – if Hashem gives me



whatever is in my best interest, why should He “change His mind?” Can we be sure that Zionism is not just another “false messiah?” What is the difference between “the world to come,” and “the revival of the dead,” and “*yemot ha-*

*mashiach*,” and where do heaven, hell and reincarnation come in? What about those *mitzvot* that seem a little “outdated”? How do we know that there is a God? Anything which might prevent us from wholeheartedly identifying with the *mitzvot* and serving Hashem should be brought to the fore and dealt with in the most straightforward fashion. Join us for an open discussion in which all questions are welcome.

## Kohelet: Why Are We Here?

RAV YONATON HIRSCHHORN

He had it all! His net worth was greater than Elon Musk’s (\$225 billion). He had more Instagram followers than Kylie Jenner (353 million). He was re-tweeted more often than Justin Bieber. Do you want a mansion by the Kotel plaza? He had a palace! But he was sad. He had it all! But it was all meaningless. Why doesn’t being rich and famous make us happy? The man who had it all will share with us why money can’t buy happiness: King Shlomo had the greatest empire



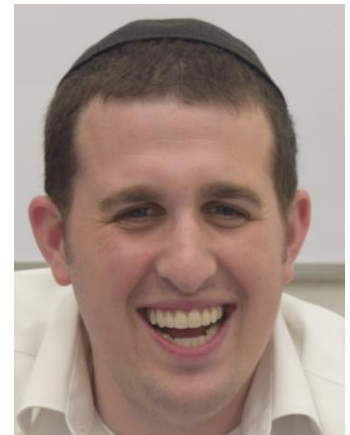
ever; all the wit and wisdom of Twitter combined; the coolest Instagram stories; and more money than Bill Gates and Jeff Bezos combined. But it was meaningless. Come find out why it was meaningless – and mostly, come find out what is meaningful.

## The 13 Core Beliefs of Judaism

RAV ELI WAGNER

How do you know you picked the right religion? Why should we believe in Hashem without direct personal

proof? Why don’t we have prophecy today? What will happen at *techiyyat ha-metim* and at the times of *Mashiach*? What is *Gan Eden*, and is the afterlife the reason we do all we do? How does being Jewish affect our view of the world – for example, how do we



understand the role of all the other nations, and what role should physical life play in our quest for holiness? Did you realize that “Adon Olam” and “Yigdal” are actually summaries of our most basic beliefs, in song form? What is problematic for us with Reform Judaism – can’t we just “live and let live” and love all Jews and Judaisms the same? Together, we will explore our core beliefs, deepening our understanding and connection to our identity. Strengthening these beliefs will enhance our *kavanah* in *tefilah* and *mitzvot* and our *emunah* in day-to-day life.

## Ultimate Questions

RAV EITAN MAYER

This provocative course is for students interested in struggling with some of the basic questions of life: Is everything in your life from God, as people so often say (“There’s no such thing as coincidence”)? If Hashem’s doing it all for you, where is there room for





your free will – does He choose your career, your shoes, your friends, your favorite ice cream? Does He sometimes just watch without getting involved? How can we tell when it's God's hand and when it's just life happening? What's the ultimate purpose of your life – is it like a big maze,

with *Olam Ha-Ba* at the end as a prize, or is there some other goal? Does God have feelings like we do – anger, sadness, happiness, love – or is He above it all? Can it be that He really cares about all those tiny little halachic details? What will happen at the “End of Days” – will people live forever on Earth after *techiyyat ha-metim*, or go on to *Olam Ha-Ba*? And what is *Olam Ha-Ba* anyway? Does *bitachon* (“trust in Hashem”) mean you have to believe everything will always turn out OK? We will explore fascinating topics in medieval and contemporary thought which have always made people wonder.

## Pathways to Hashem

RAV JASON KNAPEL

Ever experience a moment in which you suddenly realize you're having doubts about whether Hashem



exists, and you kind of panic because you don't know where to go with these thoughts? Is it OK to have doubts? How can we deal with them? How have people tried to prove Hashem's existence throughout the history of *emunah*, and do any of the proofs really work?

When we turn to Hashem in *tefilah* and ask Him for something, don't we realize that He already knows what we need, and what we're going to ask for – so what's the point? And how can *tefilah* change Hashem's mind anyway – wasn't He already planning to do the perfect thing for each of us? Orthodox Judaism today presents many ways of serving Hashem, from Modern Orthodox to Chasidic. What are the best elements of each approach, and what

are the problems each approach encounters? Join us to strengthen, refine, and mature your relationship with Hashem.

## Thought of Rav Kook (Adv.)

RAV ARI SHVAT

What is the whole point of life? How do we achieve *emunah* in Hashem? Since Hashem controls everything, and since all of us have limits of many kinds, what does free will really mean? How can evil people succeed if Hashem is watching and in control? Is the State of Israel significant only for Jewish pride and as a refuge for us, or does it have a messianic dimension? Is *teshuvah* basically negative, a depressing look at our mistakes and an attempt to do better, or is there a positive approach to *teshuvah*? How do we balance intellect against emotion in our relationship with Hashem and Torah? Is there room for the theory of evolution in the Torah? Rav Kook is considered one of the most original thinkers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and continues to inspire even today. His optimistic, inspiring, holistic approach deals with just about every question we face today, and has given meaning and direction to an entire generation in Israel.



## Introduction to Kabbalah

RAV YONATON HIRSCHHORN

What is a *neshamah*? What happens to our souls after we leave this world? What is *Gan Eden*? Is there



such a thing as *Gehennom*? Do we believe in reincarnation? When you do a *mitzvah*, is it just “done” and gone, or does it have an effect on the spiritual world and even on Hashem? Do we have any contact with souls that have left this world? Do demons

exist, and how can we protect ourselves from them? Who or what are angels? How could the Maharal create a “*golem*”? We will discuss secrets of Torah from Kabbalah, the Zohar and beyond. Join us for a taste of the hidden Torah. There is a whole world within the world of Torah, a world hidden from the



naked eye. Come peek through the looking glass into the hidden world which is all around us.

## Derech Hashem: The Hidden Spiritual World

RAV ZVI RON

Tanach is full of things Hashem has *done* – creating everything, performing lots of miracles, appearing at



Sinai – but what do we know about what He *is* and what He wants? Most of us are pretty happy the world exists, but what's in it for Hashem – why did He create the world? We know we each have a soul (and we say “*Elokai Neshamah*

every day to thank Hashem for it), but what actually *is* the soul, beyond mysterious phrases like “your essence” or “what makes you *you*”? Olam Ha-Ba is obviously not a physical place where we enjoy physical pleasures, but what do we know about it? What will actually happen in the times of Mashiach? Kabbalah is actually a whole way of looking at life, which has its own unique answers for all of Judaism's most important questions. We will study the kabbalistic thought of Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzato (Ramchal) in his work, *Derech Hashem*. We will also study the approaches of Jewish thinkers who disagreed with Ramchal.

## Chazal on Self-Awareness

RAV AVINOAM DURANI

Chazal often talk about the “*yetzer ha-ra*” like it's a force outside us – is it some kind of evil spirit, or is it really a part of us ourselves? Taking a year-long break



from life to just learn Torah, it's time to wonder: what's more important in life and Judaism, doing or learning? Do we have really have angels around us all the time, as Chazal say, or did they mean something less literal? Is

everything in the hands of Heaven, as Chazal say – don't they also say we should not trust in miracles?

How can suffering be more than an obstacle and a negative, perhaps even an important step in our success? Each of these questions is the focus of a short story or saying in the “*Agadot*” of the Talmud, where Chazal offer us advice and perspective on life, ourselves, and Hashem. In this course, we will dive into Chazal's observations on the beautiful and complex relationships between people and God, society, nature, and the self. We will aim to reach a higher level of self-awareness, the ability to take an honest look at your life. We will learn to assess whether our actions, thoughts, and emotions align with our internal standards in order to help us reach our full potential.

## Har Sinai in Emunah and Halachah

RAV ELI WAGNER

Ever wonder what really happened at Har Sinai – besides being pretty terrifying, what was it like to experience God

appearing right before us? How do we know the whole thing really took place? If we were all there, as tradition tells us, why don't we remember anything? How could an entire nation of laypeople, few of them trained as prophets, many of them just children, spontaneously



become prophets? If the whole thing was so impressive, how could our ancestors turn back to idol worship just forty days later? Turning to the content of what was said at Sinai, why were these ten commandments chosen out of all 613? (Would you have chosen “Do not covet your neighbor's house”?) What does it mean to believe in God (“I am God...”)? Is abortion categorized as murder (“Do not kill...”)? Can adultery ever be justified (“Do not commit adultery...”)? What is the Torah's view on illegally downloading music and movies – is it stealing (“Do not steal...”)? Can God command us to feel certain emotions (“Do not envy...”)? In this course, we will explore the significance and relevance of the Sinai experience and the importance of the Ten Commandments as a unit and individually, both hashkafically and halachically.

## Sho'ah ve-Emunah

RAV JASON KNAPEL

As fewer and fewer Holocaust survivors remain with us to bear witness, it becomes ever more important



for us to learn and remember what happened: What makes the Sho'ah unique in Jewish and world history? What was Jewish life like in Europe before the Sho'ah – what did we lose? How do we understand why people would hate Jews so much that

they would devote their nation's energies to killing us – when and how did this virulent hatred begin? How did the psychopaths of the Nazi party somehow take over their entire country and bend it to their will? What did the world know, when did it know it, and what did they do? What did Jews do (or not do)? What is a ghetto? What were the different kinds of camps Jews were forced to live in? Which companies profited from our slave labor and still exist today? Who were the "SS"? Did Jews and others try to resist or fight the Nazis? How did Jews find one another and find new homes after the *Sho'ah*? And, behind everything else, where was Hashem – why would He perpetrate this unspeakable suffering or even just allow it to happen? We will explore one of our greatest tragedies through the lenses of history and *hashkafah*.

## Matan Torah Today

MICHAL PORATH-ZIBMAN / SHANA BET

One of the most extraordinary events that ever happened to the Jewish people was the experience of *Matan Torah* and receiving the *Aseret Ha-Dibberot*. The Torah provides great detail about the events leading up to the actual revelation. In addition to the commandments themselves, how can the lessons of that back story apply to us today? How do we understand the first of the Ten Commandments, "I am Hashem, your God" – is it a command, or just an introduction to the commands? How can God command us not to be jealous? While it's certainly important not to "bear false witness," why is it such a significant part of our core value system that it should make the ultimate "top ten" list of mitzvot? Through the eyes of classic *parshanim*, Chasidic Rebbes, and other commentators, we will dive into a



textual journey that will enrich our own life experiences and *avodat Hashem*.

## Rambam: From Moshe to Moshe

RAV AVINOAM DURANI / SHANA BET

Does Hashem like barbecue as much as we do, or is there some other explanation for korbanot? When Mashiach comes and we build the Beit Ha-Mikdash, are we really going back to sacrificing animals? Will we still daven then? For that matter, when Mashiach comes, will the whole world change magically – no more



yetzer ha-ra, no more wars, no more need to work for a living – or will life remain mostly the same, just more peaceful? What are the exact steps in training to become a prophet? Is learning Torah in a kollel the ideal way to serve Hashem, or does God specifically want us to work for a living and learn in our free time? Nowadays, the Rambam is viewed as the central pillar of Jewish thought and the greatest posek ever. None of our Tana'im or Amora'im was called "Moshe" – since Moshe Rabbeinu gave us the Torah, the world was waiting for Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon, the Rambam, to deliver it again. So why was his Mishneh Torah faced with strong opposition almost as soon as it was published, sometimes forbidden and occasionally even burned? In this course, we will explore the uniqueness of the Rambam in the realm of Halacha and thought: What goals did he try to achieve? How did his being a physician and scientist impact his perspective? We will relate to selections from his most monumental



works, including the Commentary on the Mishnah, the Mishneh Torah, and the Guide of the Perplexed and more. Our goal will be to recognize the uniting themes of his many diverse works and perhaps to adopt some of his approaches to Jewish tradition, mankind, Eretz Yisrael and Am Yisrael.

## Foundations of Emunah

R. ASSAF BEDNARSH / SHANA BET

Joint Shana Bet Shiur at Gruss Campus

Sponsored by Yeshiva University

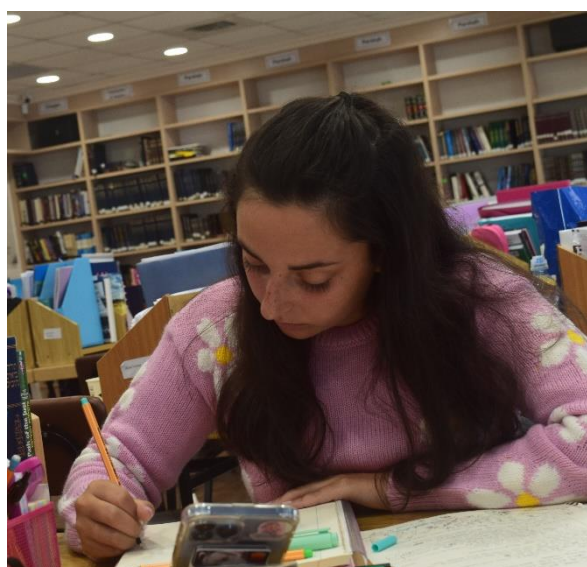


Join us to explore fascinating topics and see what the greats of all generations actually said about them:



Free will; the suffering of the righteous; what is the afterlife; resurrection and mashiach; Divine intervention in our lives; how prayer “works”; halachah and ethics. We will also explore topics in our tradition like

how there can be multiple legitimate opinions; the rabbis’ power to create new laws and change old ones; and what is a “chumrah” and when does it make sense to adopt one.









# HASHKAFAH

## Am Yisrael, Eretz Yisrael U-Medinat Yisrael

RAV ARI SHVAT

What is the ideal lifestyle – learning Torah all day or working for a living? How do we know whether the



modern State of Israel is really the start of the *ge'ulah*? How can religious Jews support a secular Jewish State? In-depth pros and cons of aliyah – is it for you? *Datiyyim, Chilonim, Charedim*: Where are they each coming from? Is there a solution?

Tzahal (the IDF): victories, dilemmas & halachic issues (like drafting girls into the Israeli army). Are we a religion or a nation? What's the relationship between nationalism, individualism and globalism? If Israel is ours just because we have history here, weren't there other people here before us, and other people here once we left to exile? In addition to classic & contemporary sources, we will also analyze the sources cited by Chareidi anti-Zionists. Through lectures, discussions, and songs, we will examine our historical time period and take our relationship with *Am Yisrael, Eretz Yisrael* and *Medinat Yisrael* to the next level.

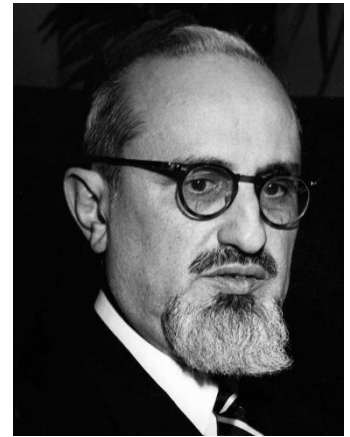
## Rav Soloveitchik's Lonely Man of Faith

RAV JASON KNAPEL

What is a human being, and what is our task as humans in our lifetime – from God's perspective, what is our purpose? Since God doesn't need our praise and already knows what we need, what is the purpose of *tefilah*? Family is obviously crucial for all people, but what unique perspectives does the Torah add? How does a Jew continue to connect with the God who sat by and allowed the Holocaust to



happen? How should a Jew making her life in *chutz la-aretz* look at the State of Israel and at Zionism? These are just some of the issues we will encounter as we explore the thought of one of the greatest Torah giants of the last generation – the one person who, more than anyone else, influenced the growth of Modern Orthodoxy in America.



## Frum But Normal

RAV ASHER MANNING

In our modern world, religious people are often seen as weirdos, and we have all felt tensions between our modern side and our religious side. How do we achieve a balance that will help us feel we're living the best life? How can we feel more at home inhabiting two identities at the same time – Orthodox Jew and Citizen of the World? What should



be our attitude to non-Jews and other religions? Zionism says there should be a Jewish country, or a country for Jews – so is Zionism really racism, as the United Nations says? Should religious people play sports, or is there something not frum about it? Should we value art, or is it "goyische" nonsense? How about movies and TV – even if we avoid forbidden content, are they anything more than a waste of time? Is the Torah pro-slavery? Should Jews be communist or capitalist? What role should Jewish women play in religious society today? Is halachah sexist? Anti-science? Is there a way for us to



integrate the outside world into our personal Avodat Hashem, or maybe the two worlds are just too antithetical to each other? Ever since the very first Jew ever stepped outside, we've been grappling with this conundrum. Join us as we explore the different models of religious identities and lifestyles. Together, we will analyze all these questions and much more in our quest for the true meaning of a religious Jewish life in the 21st century.

## Michtav Me-Eliyahu

RAV RAFI ROSENBLUM

If Judaism says that love isn't just about attraction, what is it about, and how does one go about



achieving true love? Does everyone have the same amount of free will, and do we ourselves have the same amount at all points of our lives? What is true happiness?

How much time and effort do I need to invest in my career, and how much should I just rely on Hashem? Some people claim that we see miracles every day – but where are they, and how should this affect my life? Rav Eliyahu Dessler was born in Europe right before the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and became one of the youngest students ever to be accepted to the famous Yeshiva of Kelm. He left an immense impact everywhere he went, including England and, at the end of his life, Eretz Yisrael. Join us as we look at Rav Dessler's approach to many different issues, exploring how he built upon earlier sources and how other Gedolim approached these topics.

## Thought of Rav Kook (Adv.)

RAV ARI SHVAT

What is the whole point of life? How do we achieve *emunah* in Hashem? Since Hashem controls everything, and since all of us have limits of many kinds, what does free will really mean? How can evil people succeed if Hashem is watching and in control? Is the State of Israel significant only for Jewish pride and as a refuge for us, or does it have a messianic dimension? Is *teshuvah* basically negative, a



depressing look at our mistakes and an attempt to do better, or is there a positive approach to *teshuvah*? How do we balance intellect against emotion in our relationship with Hashem and Torah? Is there room for the theory of evolution in the Torah? Rav Kook is considered one of the most original thinkers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and continues to inspire even today. His optimistic, inspiring, holistic approach deals with just about every question we face today, and has given meaning and direction to an entire generation in Israel.



## Jewish By Choice

RAV AHARON WEXLER

Way back when, in the "Olden Days," no one really had options – you were born into a life and you usually just stayed there, like it or not. But modern life, more than anything else, even more than technology, is about having choices. Even if we are born as Jews (and not all of us are), living a Jewish life today is a choice we make – because today, there are other options. So, in this world of endless options, in which each



individual chooses for herself, we need to choose consciously; we need to understand our options. Is Judaism a race, something we're born into, or a religion, something we choose; or both? In the time of Moshe Rabbeinu, there was one Judaism, but today there's Orthodoxy, Conservative, Reform, and more; and even within Orthodoxy, there's "Modern" and "Ultra." What do these labels mean, beyond the cliches and preconceptions? What strengths and weaknesses does each option bring, and how can we get the best of all the worlds? Women's role in society, too – their domestic role and men's authority over them – once was taken for granted and never consciously thought about. But today, women have so many options. How do we reconcile Jewish sources on women with our own modern sensibilities? Join us to grapple with the many options we face as Jews today and how to best choose among them.





## What Is a Jew?

RABBI YAAKOV YISROEL WENGLIN



Did you ever wonder what life is really about, what your purpose is, or what you're supposed to be doing with your life? Have you seen one of those videos or documentaries that go "behind-the-scenes" of really cool stuff or that show "the way things work"? This text-based course will go "behind the scenes" of physical reality to reveal the way things work in spiritual reality, thereby answering the two questions above and many more. We will draw from two holy *sefarim* – Nefesh HaChaim and Tanya – to offer you greater clarity on the structure of reality as Hashem created it and the structure of your soul as Hashem created you. We will follow these texts to learn that you are in this world in a relationship with Hashem, and that you can deepen and strengthen that relationship by tapping into the spiritual power of your *neshamah*. You may also find out that the Jews really do "control" the world at the highest levels... just in a way that you may not have expected. Rather than "Who Is a Jew?" (Reform, Conservative, Orthodox, etc.), we will focus on the question of "What Is a Jew?"

## Avoiding Evil vs Pursuing the Good: Hashkafah Approaches in Life

RAV EFRONI SCHLESINGER

Even crossing the street involves a small amount of risk, but most people figure it's worth it, right? But



life presents us with many situations in which we can prioritize either avoiding the bad (minimizing risk) or seeking out the good (even with some risk). Where do you draw your line? For example: If we want to be sure to avoid doing anything

wrong, does that basically mean we should take all halachic opinions into account and always follow the most "*machmir*" one, or would that make life too stifling? Can we learn things that contradict the Torah in order to understand them better – like

taking a course in college about other religions, or a course taught by a Bible professor who thinks the Torah is not from Hashem – or should we just avoid having any contact with those influences? You're at a Shabbat meal, and a yeshiva boy is arguing that girls shouldn't learn Gemara and that their hearts and minds aren't cut out for it. Is it permitted for girls to learn Gemara? Even if it is OK, is it a good idea (so we should push it), or just a neutral idea (so just for people who are interested), or not a great idea (so we should basically avoid it)? If it is a good idea, why haven't girls been taught Gemara all through our history – what has changed? In this class, we'll focus on how our *hashkafah* impacts the way we learn Torah and keep *mitzvot*, as we each find our comfort level in balancing between avoiding the evils of life and seeking out the goods. We'll learn how each individual can navigate and develop a *hashkafah* that is both personal and true to our tradition.

## Questions in Emunah

RAV ARI SHVAT

What is the goal of life? Why did God create the world? How does *tefilah* work – if Hashem gives me



whatever is in my best interest, why should He "change His mind?" Can we be sure that Zionism is not just another "false messiah"? What is the difference between "the world to come," and "the revival of the dead," and "*yemot ha-*

*mashiach*," and where do heaven, hell and reincarnation come in? What about those *mitzvot* that seem a little "outdated"? How do we know that there is a God? Anything which might prevent us from wholeheartedly identifying with the *mitzvot* and serving Hashem should be brought to the fore and dealt with in the most straightforward fashion. Join us for an open discussion in which all questions are welcome.

**TIP:** "Midmorechoices" will open each night for you to change your schedule freely as often as you like (no changes during the day).

## Pathways to Hashem

RAV JASON KNAPEL

Ever experience a moment in which you suddenly realize you're having doubts about whether Hashem



exists, and you kind of panic because you don't know where to go with these thoughts? Is it OK to have doubts? How can we deal with them? How have people tried to prove Hashem's existence throughout the history of emunah, and do any of the proofs really work?

When we turn to Hashem in tefilah and ask Him for something, don't we realize that He already knows what we need, and what we're going to ask for – so what's the point? And how can tefilah change Hashem's mind anyway – wasn't He already planning to do the perfect thing for each of us? Orthodox Judaism today presents many ways of serving Hashem, from Modern Orthodox to Chasidic. What are the best elements of each approach, and what are the problems each approach encounters? Join us to strengthen, refine, and mature your relationship with Hashem.

## The Joy of Being a Jew (“JOBAJ”)

RABBI YY WENGLIN / TWO SECTIONS TO CHOOSE FROM



Let's face it: It's simply more exciting to go to a concert or a ballgame or a party than it is to *daven Shacharit*. Or to take *challah*. Or to keep *Shabbos*. Or to... You get the point. In this course, we will start with some basics of

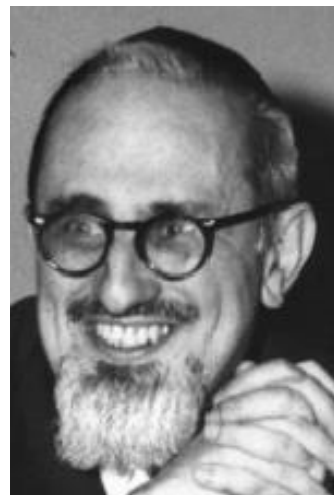
Jewish *hashkafah* and then progress to deeper ideas of *Kabbalah/Chassidus* to help us understand ourselves and our relationship with Hashem. We will gradually learn to look at the world as a place filled with His holiness and wisdom, one-hundred percent suited for intense closeness and attachment to Him. Anticipated topics include truth, our deep desires in life, self-esteem, spiritual reality, emotions, *davening*, *Shabbos*, and much more. Once a Jew more fully appreciates and internalizes deeper ideas in Judaism, her joy from being Jewish increases

proportionately. Who knows, you might even walk away from this course knowing how to make an “*asher yatzar*” with the same *simchah* and passion as if you had won America Idol!

## Rav Soloveitchik on the Jewish Family

MALKA HUBSCHER

Want to improve your relationships with your siblings, parents or grandparents? Maybe already thinking about how to have a great marriage and how to be a good mother? The time to become the person you would like to be... is now. The Jewish family has always been the backbone of our nation; family relationships define, shape and influence us throughout our entire lives. They can be very loving, positive and enriching, and at the same time complex and stressful. In this course, using Rav Soloveitchik's “Family Redeemed” and other selections from his writing, we will learn from this world-class *gadol*, modern philosopher, and deeply sensitive, sympathetic, and wise observer of human and Jewish nature how to improve the dynamics within our own families.



## Zionism & the Jewish State

RAV AHARON WEXLER

Join us for an intensive study of the political history that brought about a Jewish State in *Eretz Yisrael*. Who were these secular and religious men and women who, with the help of God, brought about a complete change in Jewish affairs after a 2000-year *galut*? What happened in the 19th century to bring Zionism into the hearts and minds of the people?







## Shiur Klali

"TAG-TEAM": BRACHA, RAV EITAN, AND RAV JASON

The entire student body comes together for a weekly "shmooze" hosted by our administrators. We'll begin with the week's brief but important announcements and update you about upcoming events in our calendar, including *tiyyulim* and *shabbatonim*. Then, working as a tag-team, we'll address timely matters in the year in Israel as they come up. For example: How can you make a strong beginning in your seminary year? How can you identify your goals for the year and then translate them into a concrete personal to-do list? How do you handle challenging interpersonal situations? How do you decide what to take on in the year in Israel without thinking overly much about how this is going to work outside seminary? And then how do you successfully take your growth back into the world outside? How can you best prepare for challenges like vacations, the summer, college, and a busy life full of distractions? "Shiur Klali" will help provide you with a sense of direction for the year and reflections that will take you beyond.

## What "Am Yisrael" Really Means

RAV EFRONI SCHLESINGER / SHANA BET

The first time we were ever called a religion ("דת") wasn't until the Purim story, when Haman asked



Achashverosh for permission to kill the Jews. Before that, we were neither a "religion" nor were we "Jewish." We were the "Nation of Israel," "עם ישראל" or "בני ישראל" – Hashem promised to make Avraham into a great nation; Hashem called Yaakov "Yisrael," and his children the "children of Israel." Over the centuries of our wandering the exile, with no land of our own and no one language in common, we forgot almost entirely what it meant to be a nation rather than a religion. But in the last few generations, with our return to our Land and the revival of our language, appreciation of being Am Yisrael has returned to the forefront. The difference isn't just semantic: Seeing ourselves as a nation is essential for understanding our obligation in Torah and mitzvot, our relationships with each other and other nations, our connection to the Land of Israel, and our mission in the world.

## Find Your Personal Hashkafah

RAV JASON KNAPEL / SHANA BET

"Ideas, Personalities, Books and *Hashkafot* Every Shana Better Needs To Know"

There are so many people and *sefarim* that have shaped the way Jews have thought and lived throughout our history – Rav Kook, Ben Gurion, Natan Scharansky, the Chatam Sofer, the Minchat Chinuch, the Torah Temimah, the Mishnah Berurah.... Here is your chance to be exposed to the vastness of our *mesorah* – religious and non, right wing and left. In addition to meeting great people, we will be exploring diverse *hashkafot*, ideas and views within our tradition, all geared toward helping you, the "Shana Better," arrive at your own *hashkafah* and world view as you transition from Sem into "Real Life."



# History and Society



## Did They Do the Right Thing? (Adv) Analyzing Halachah in Historical Situations

RAV ELI WAGNER

Ever been to Masada and learned about the mass suicide? What about the false messiah, Shabtai Zvi,



who convinced thousands of Jews that he was the “real thing”? (For that matter, when the “real thing” does arrive, how will we be sure?) If you fall in love with an Ethiopian, can you marry him – where did he come from? What is his history and halachic status? Have you ever learned about a

fascinating episode in history and thought, “What would I do in that situation?” or “What would the Torah want me to do?” Often, when learning about either history or *halachah*, we focus solely on one and neglect the other. Each week in this course, we will choose a significant event in our history and analyze a halachic challenge it presents (including episodes nominated by participants in the course). The skills gained and lessons learned through our analysis of each topic will allow us to put ourselves in the shoes of Jews through the ages and view history and *halachah* in a new light.

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## Lives of our Gedolim

RAV HANOKH TELLER

Quick – can you name ten social media influencers or Youtube stars or Tik-Tokkers who are hot right now?

Great! Now – can you name five *Gedolei Ha-Dor* (great rabbinic leaders) since 1980? If you had an easier time with the first question than with the second, we need to talk about your “influencers”!



What happens when your parents are pushing you one way, and you believe that God is wishing you a different way? How do you know what you should really be looking for in a husband, and the qualities to avoid no matter what? What do you do if your roommate is selfish, but if you try and correct her, she will say bad things about you? What do you do if you see a student taking “liberties” with school property, say something (and to whom?) or mind your own business? There isn’t a facet of life, from controlling your anger to how to concentrate better in davening – with every dilemma above thrown in, that has not been illuminated by our contemporary *Gedolim*. Join us to learn from the lives of *Gedolim* and benefit from their deep wisdom, long experience and vast Torah knowledge.

## Walking the Streets of Jerusalem

RAV KALMAN FLAKS

You live in Jerusalem this entire year – what a great opportunity to get better acquainted with the world’s holiest city! Together, we will journey to different neighborhoods, learning Torah and history from the names and features of the streets. Learning





on “Azaryah Street,” have you ever wondered who Azaryah was? “Emek Refa’im” actually means “Valley of Ghosts” – but why would anyone think our neighborhood is haunted? Who was “Ben Yehuda,” and why was an important street named after

him? Why is the gate of the Old City named Sha’ar Yafo? We will learn a lot with our eyes, ears and feet, and get some exercise as well!

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RAV JASON KNAPEL

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# *Sho'ah ve-Emunah Program*

IN MEMORY OF RABBI AVRAHAM AND MIRIAM JUNGREIS  
& REBBETZIN ESTHER JUNGREIS



## **Sho'ah ve-Emunah Course**

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## **THE "POLAND EXPERIENCE" TRIP**

Join our faculty and expert guides for an unforgettable Poland experience of memory, identity and appreciation of a Jewish world that once existed and is now gone forever, as we visit both crucial Holocaust sites and also places of key importance to our Jewish past.



# CnC

“ C H A V R U T O T   &   C H A B U R O T ”

In almost every hour in our schedule, you'll see an option called “Chavrutot and Chaburot” or “CnC.” (We also call it a “Beit Midrash period.”) When you sign up for a period of “Chavrutot & Chaburot,” you are joining a tradition pioneered by students through centuries of Jewish history and continued today in every yeshiva all around the world.

Our Beit Midrash is the heart of Midreshet Moriah. It's the place where you'll find your very own “*makom*,” a permanent place for the year where you can keep your personal *sefarim* and do your learning. It will help you feel a sense of belonging, connection and ownership and facilitate your learning and your tefilah.

**The keys to success in CnC are a) putting your phone away so it doesn't distract you and b) choosing a project so that you don't waste time every week trying to decide what to do (or just space out...).** The teachers staffing the *Beit Midrash* will have lots of suggestions for what you could learn, whether it's Tanach, *halachah*, Jewish thought, working on your Hebrew, or anything else.

## C N C   O P T I O N S

### REVIEW:

Welcome to adult learning ☺, where the good news is that there are no tests, but the bad news is that if you want to remember anything, the **ONLY** way is to review. Don't fall into the trap of spending every moment learning something new. As the *Gemara* teaches us, “Learning without reviewing is like planting and never harvesting!” Schedule in the number of CnC's you'll need to: a) go over what you learned, b) make sure you understand it, c) clarify your notes, d) make lists of questions to go back to ask your teachers.

### PREP:

Teachers may assign preparation for you to complete before the next shiur. Other teachers may casually throw out challenges or suggestions for those who want more depth. When do you do it? CnC! You'll have teachers around in the *Beis* so you can get help if you have questions.

### PERSONAL PROJECTS:

Need time to review the *parshah* (and write a *Devar Torah*) or learn more about a topic which interests you? Interested in doing *Nach Yomi* or Bracha's



*Parshah* quiz sheets? Want to learn *be-chavruta* with another girl or with a *madrichah* or teacher? CnC is the time! More than any other kind of learning you'll do at seminary, working on your own or with a *chavruta* in the *Beit Midrash*, making progress through a *sefer* you thought was beyond you, is the way you'll gain skills which will last you a lifetime and help you in all the learning you do. Challenge yourself!

### CHABUROT:

Led by a teacher, a "*chaburah*" is a "group *chavruta*" which meets in the *Beit Midrash* around a table to learn a *sefer* together. A *chaburah* provides a great opportunity to form a real connection with your teachers because it's a small group and creates a more personal atmosphere. It also means that if you really wanted to learn a certain *sefer* this year and then found it wasn't on our schedule of courses, you can arrange with a teacher to give a *chaburah* on the topic – and now your *sefer* is on the schedule!

### SOME PAST CHABUROT

Peninei Halachah ✨ Tehilim ✨ Kohelet  
Rambam ✨ *Em Ha-Banim Semeichah* ✨ Parshah  
Igeret Ha-Ramban ✨ Kedoshim Tihyu ✨ Rav Sacks  
Rav Soloveitchik ✨ Mesilat Yesharim ✨ Orchot  
Sefer Yonah ✨ Jewish Meditation ✨ Shoftim  
Olam Ha-Midot ✨ Olam Ha-Avodah ✨ Bilvavi



Each week, we will learn various topics together (including *midot*, *lashon ha-ra*, *chesed*) in either *chavruta* or *chaburah* style. No previous experience in special needs required – the only skills you need are patience, sensitivity, and a big heart 😊. Join us and become an exciting part of their (and your) *Beit Midrash* experience!

### LATE-NIGHT BEIS

Regular "Night Seder" ends at 9:20, but the Rambam teaches us that night-time learning is the highest-quality learning there is, and that someone who wants to grow in learning should never waste a night! So... on Sun, Tue and Wed nights, we're staffing the *Beis* until 10:20 with faculty who will be offering you *chaburot* and more. Looking for the crowd who's most "into" learning? Come join us in the Late-Night *Beis*! (Yes, Late-Night *Beis* counts as an "hour" in your total number of hours!)



### "MISHMAR":

Thursday nights at 9:30 PM, come to the *Beis* for the very last shiur of the week – an inspiring, informal shiur stocked with cholent, kugel, plenty of nosh and delivered by a rotation of teachers and guest speakers. This is purely *lishmah* – you can't sign up for it, you don't get credit for it, but you do get lots of great food and there's no better way to end your learning week!

### WEEKLY PARSHA QUIZ

BRACHA KROHN / LISHMAH & PRIZES! 😊

Review the *parshah* during your *Beis* time, and then do a weekly quiz to earn prizes! Each student who succeeds in making a *siyyum* of a *sefer* in *Chumash* will be given a gift certificate a book store. Join the excitement as students independently learn through the Torah *parshah* by *parshah* "*bekiut*-style," taking a simple weekly quiz every Sunday on פרשיות 1-3 to mark your progress (the schedule is posted). (Note: this isn't a course you "sign up" for.)

## SPECIAL CNC'S

### YOUR SPECIAL MIDRESHET DARKAYNU CHAVRUTA

MICHAL PORATH ZIBMAN

Midreshet Darkaynu is a seminary for young women with 'light' special needs. On Sunday evenings at 7:30pm, you will have an opportunity to do a different form of *chesed* and get to know them through a relationship of learning Torah together.



# SHANA BET LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

RAV JASON KNAPEL, SHANA BET DIRECTOR

Shana Bet at Midreshet Moriah is much more than “Shana Aleph continued.” Our Shana Bet is a specially designed program of its own, complete with its own dedicated roster of exclusive Shana Bet courses and a full program of special Shana Bet shabbatonim and tiyyulim. Our Shana Bet students benefit from the academic, personal, and religious guidance provided by our Shana Bet Director, Rav Jason Knapel. Shana Bet is not just “more learning” in quantity; it is a qualitatively different experience, enabling our Shana Bet students to accomplish more during this half-year program than many of them accomplished in their entire Shana Aleph. If Shana Aleph enables our students to discover their own independent, adult connection to Torah, Shana Bet deepens that bond with maturity, sophistication, passion and focus.



# ADMINISTRATION & FACULTY

## Administration



**Rabbi Meyer Berglas**, Founder and Dean. Rabbi Berglas's warm smile, gentle manner, and deep wisdom have made him a beloved mentor to decades of students, and his shiurim play a central role in shaping the character and values of our students. Every year, a few students are privileged to learn with Rabbi Berglas be-chavruta as part of Midreshet's unique commitment to the growth of each individual student. Rabbi Berglas, a student of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, received Semikhah and an MHL from RIETS and an MA at Columbia University. Rabbi Berglas lives in Neve Alizah, the community he founded with his wife, Vicky.



**Mrs. Vicky Berglas**, Director. Vicky's warmth and empathy make her a much sought-after confidant and chavruta, and the sounds of laughter with the joy of learning always accompany her "chevrah" in the Bet Midrash. When Vicky leads our students on the annual tour of Poland, they are treated to her unique perspective, which combines encyclopedic historical knowledge with a deep connection to the great personalities of our past and the conviction that the Holocaust can inspire us toward meaning and accomplishment in our personal own lives. Vicky also serves as a guide at Yad Vashem. She earned a BA in Psychology and Judaic Studies at Yeshiva University and an MA in Jewish History at Haifa University. Vicky lives in Neve Alizah, the community she founded with her husband, Rabbi Meyer Berglas.



**Rabbi Eitan Mayer**, Menahel. Rav Eitan teaches Tanach, Halachah, and Jewish Philosophy. Rav Eitan is known both for his wry sense of humor and his shiurim in Chumash and Machshavah, which emphasize creative thinking and personal grappling with Torah's implications for our lives. Rav Eitan is always available for personal advice, halachic questions, and discussions on emunah. Rav Eitan learned at Yeshivat Sha'alvim, received Semichah at RIETS as a Wexner Graduate Fellow, and continued his learning in the Beren Kollel Elyon. He earned a BA in English Literature and an

MA in Jewish Education at Yeshiva University, and is completing an MA in Jewish Philosophy and an EdD in Jewish Education at Yeshiva University. Rav Eitan taught at GPATS at Yeshiva University and served as Assistant Rabbi at The Jewish Center on Manhattan's Upper West Side. Rav Eitan lives in Neve Daniel with his family. In his spare time, he's out in his garden tending to his pineapples, strawberries, mulberries, blackberries, cherries, blueberries, and more.



**Mrs. Bracha Krohn**, Menahelit. Bracha teaches Tanach and Musar. Bracha has an enthusiasm for learning which permeates the classroom. Her dynamic teaching style encourages participation and fosters a strong desire to learn, and her openness and genuineness create an environment for thoughtful, honest questioning. She has a special way of identifying with students and showing them her authentic care and concern. Bracha learned at Michlalah, was Jewish Studies valedictorian and earned a BA at Stern College in Jewish Studies and English Literature, and studied Bible at Yeshiva University's Bernard Revel Graduate School. She taught for seven years at the Fuchs Mizrahi School and the Women's Beit Midrash in Cleveland before making aliyah in 2008. Bracha currently serves on the educational staff of Camp Stone. She lives in Efrat with her family.



**Hodaya Stark** is Eim Bayit and thinks of our seminary and its students as a second family. As an alumna herself, as well as a prior madricha and rakezet, she has a unique ability to understand the girls' experience and be there as a helping hand throughout this pivotal year. With warmth and enthusiasm, Hodaya is able to create lasting relationships with the students and impact their experience. Hodaya received her B.A. in psychology from Excelsior College and is eager to use all the skills she's learned to help the students adjust comfortably and optimize their year. Hodaya really enjoys learning and teaching musar, emunah, and chasidut. She is always available for "heart to hearts" and "chilling," as well as offering chaburot and chavrutot with the students. Hodaya lives with her family in Beit Shemesh and looks forward to being a second home for the students.



## Faculty



**Rabbi Uri Cohen** ("Rav Uri") teaches halachah and Jewish Thought. Rav Uri's vast knowledge, infectious curiosity and love of learning, broad grasp of contemporary Jewish and popular culture, and warm smile and sense of humor all endear him

to our students and make his shiurim not-to-be-missed. Rav Uri learned at Yeshivat Shaalvim and Yeshivat Hamivtar and received Semichah from RIETS and the Joseph Straus Seminary at Yeshivat Hamivtar. He earned a BA in Jewish Studies, an MA in Medieval Jewish History, and an MS in Jewish Education from Yeshiva University. Rav Uri has served as a teacher and Rabbi at Princeton University. In his spare time, he is on a quest to listen to every singer or band (one album each, currently up to 6,832). He lives in Ramat Beit Shemesh with his wife, Dr. Yocheved Cohen.



**Rav Avinoam Durani** teaches halachah, Tanach and Jewish Thought. Rav Avinoam joins us after 21 years of inspiring students at Maimonides School in Boston, where he was a Grade Dean and

taught Judaic Studies. His warmth, relatability and optimism helped him grow the Sephardic community of Newton, where he was Rabbi for eight years, into a thriving and welcoming Torah home for Jews of every background and all walks of life. Rabbi Durani received Semichah from former chief Rabbi of Israel Mordechai Eliyahu and Chief Rabbi of Kiriya Ono Dr. Ratson Arusi. He served for three years in the Israeli army in a combat unit before studying History and Tanach at Michlelet Lifshitz, Judaic studies at the Open University, and Rabbinic Studies at Yeshivat Hameiri. He has an MA in Jewish education and is the recipient of the Amit Excellence in Education award. Rabbi Durani is looking forward to his new role as a Rav Mechanech at Yeshivat Lev Hatorah, along with joining the team at Midreshet Moriah.



**Mrs. Dena Flaks** is a Rakezet. With her warm, cheerful personality, she is able to connect to people of all backgrounds and ages. Originally from St. Louis, Missouri, she attended Michlalah and received her BA in Judaic Studies and Psychology from Hebrew

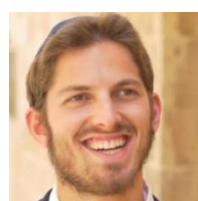
Theological College in Chicago. She has worked at several seminaries, always creating meaningful relationships with students and staff alike, and has

spoken about her personal spiritual journey to various audiences. Dena is also an actress for women in her spare time and has been active on stage and behind the scenes for a variety of shows. Dena and her husband, Rav Kalman, live in the Old City of Jerusalem and strive to find inspiration and meaning in everyday life.



**Rav Kalman Flaks** teaches Halachah, Chasidut and other inspirational topics, keeping his classes fun, interactive and practical. He started an organization called "The Simcha Center" to bring (you guessed it) simchah and holy Shabbos meals to

Anglos in Jerusalem and works as a tour guide, helping spread love of Eretz Yisrael. Rav Kalman is involved in shidduchim, and his passions include Ultimate Frisbee and power dancing at the Kotel on Friday Nights. He has traveled far and wide on various "shlichuyot," spreading Torah values to "lost tribe" Jews in various countries, but his main passion is helping Jews learn to love Yiddishkeit and helping people with a smile. Rav Kalman attended Bar Ilan University, majoring in Tanach, and studied Semichah while teaching at Yeshivat Orayta. He lives with his wife Dena in the Old City.



**Rav Jonny Friedman's** positivity, joyful humility and contagious smile allow him to connect easily with all types of students, and his enthusiasm and motivating nature energize their learning

experiences. He has taught at Midreshet Eshel, Yeshivat Orayta, Lev Hatorah, Midreshet Amit, and the Kemach Institute. Rav Jonny received Semichah from Rav Zalman Nechemia Goldberg and an MS in Jewish Education from Azrieli Graduate School. Along with his passion for Torah, he started a business creating Judaica from wood and resin. Rav Jonny lives in Jerusalem with his family.



**Dr. Aviva Goldstein** Dr. Aviva Goldstein is an educational consultant and family counselor whose research, counseling and teaching focus on the intersection of positive psychology, family cohesion, and Judaism. She teaches

positive psychology to both college students and educators, weaving together what research and Judaism teach about happiness and a life well-lived. Fascinated by the science of resilience, empathy and gratitude, she particularly enjoys teaching gap-year students at a critical moment in their lives. In her private practice, she works with individuals and

families and specializes in parenting, adolescence and child development. Aviva holds a doctorate in education from Yeshiva University. She made aliyah from Riverdale, New York, and lives in Jerusalem with her family. Aviva loves cooking, can't stand baking, finds inspiration in clever aesthetic design, and always has a stack of books she's in the middle of reading simultaneously.



**Rav Yonaton Hirschhorn** teaches Jewish Spirituality and Chasidut. Rav Yonaton's warmth, depth, creativity, honesty, humor, real caring for each student and her spiritual growth, and sensitive understanding of each student's strengths and her challenges make his shiurim a unique personal and transformative experience. Rav Yonaton learned at Yeshivat Otniel and Yeshivat Bat Ayin, received Semichah from Rav Zalman Nechemya Goldberg, and studied Jewish Thought and Torah She-Ba'al Peh at Herzog College. He lives in Talmonim with his family.



**Mrs. Malka Hubscher** teaches Tanach. Malka is known for her great sense of humor, her ability to make any and all learning exciting, her down-to-earth wisdom and good advice, and the intensity and focus of her shiurim. Malka learned at Michlalah and earned a BA in Jewish Studies and an MA in Bible at Yeshiva University. She lives in Efrat with her family.



**Mrs. Sepha Kirshblum** teaches Tanach and Jewish Thought. Sepha has a genuine love for both her students and Torah, especially Tanach. She tries to create a balance of creativity, fun, humor and kavod Ha-Torah in the classroom to help her students love learning as much as she does. Before making aliyah, Sepha taught Tanach at the Ramaz Upper School, where she was also Senior Grade Advisor, Israel Advisor, and involved in extracurricular programming. Sepha received her BA from Stern College with a Major in Judaic Studies and a Minor in Psychology. She received a dual Masters in both special and regular Education from Hunter College. Sepha lives in Efrat with her family.

**Rav Jason Knapel** ("Rav Jason") is beloved as a mechanech for both his fascinating and inspiring shiurim as well as his easy approachability and warmth as a mentor to our students. He served as



Director of Informal Education, Director of Judaic Studies and Assistant Principal at Hillel Yeshiva High School in Deal, New Jersey for many years. Subsequent to his aliyah, he was Mashgiach Ruchani at Yeshivat Shvilei HaTorah and teaches at Sha'alvim for Women. Rav Jason was ordained at RIETS and received his BA from Yeshiva College and an MS from the Bernard Revel Graduate School. He lives in Beit Shemesh with his family.



**Rabbi Yitzchak Lerner** teaches Halakhah and Jewish Thought. Rav Lerner is known for his high-energy teaching style, his fiery passion for Torah and mitzvot, his personal warmth as a mentor, and his outstanding shiurim in Hilchot Shabbat and Musar. Whether in shiur or in personal conversations, Rav Lerner's transformative impact on his students remains with them for years to come. Rav Lerner learned at Yeshivat Midrash Shmuel and received Semikhah from Rav Zalman Nechemyah Goldberg. He earned a BA in Political Science at Concordia University. Rav Lerner lives in Betar with his family.



**Rav Asher Manning** teaches Tanach and Jewish Thought. Born in London and raised in Jerusalem, Rav Asher combines a British sense of humor with the Israeli mindset of thinking outside the box. He has a passion for teaching and broadening minds, always pushing his students to challenge their preconceptions and discover more of themselves. Rav Asher learned at Yeshivat Har Etzion, where he was a close talmid of Rav Yaakov Medan and Rav Yoel Bin-Nun. He also studied at Yeshivat Maalot and Yeshivat Otniel, where he developed a passion for the thought of Rav Kook. After serving in a combat unit in the IDF, he returned to Kollel and received Semichah from the Israeli Rabbanut. Rav Asher completed a Teachers Degree (B. Ed.) in Tanach and Machshevet Yisrael at Herzog College and is currently writing his Master's thesis in Tanach at Bar Ilan University. Over the last three years, Rav Asher and his wife Lia had the zechut of being the NCSY Israel Chapter Directors for Gush Etzion. Rav Asher lives with his family in Alon Shvut.

**Mrs. Neima Novetsky** teaches Tanach. Neima creates a unique environment in her shiurim – setting a high standard of learning, she also embraces her students with personal caring, shares her own enthusiasm for learning, and in every shiur,





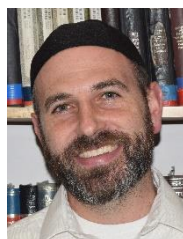
gives over some of her own love for Torah. Neima's unique approach not only excites and inspires with insights into the topic being learned, but also leaves her students with a sense of method, "learning how to learn," so that they can go on to learn further on their own. Neima holds a BA in Religion and a Certificate in Language and Culture from Princeton University and an MA in Bible from the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Yeshiva University. Before making aliyah, she founded and directed the Advanced Tanakh Beit Midrash Program at Manhattan's Lincoln Square Synagogue. She lives in Yerushalayim with her family.



**Mrs. Michal Porat-Zibman** teaches Jewish Thought. Michal is a teacher of great charisma and passion, inspiring her students with her exciting shiurim in *musar* and *machshavah*, learning individually with them in chaburot (small groups) and chavrutot in the Bet Midrash, and devoting countless hours to personal conversations and one-on-one shmoozes. Michal also guides groups at Yad Vashem, and leads groups touring Poland, and has been a member of Camp HASC's administration for many years. Michal earned a BA at Bar Ilan University in Jewish History and lives in Neve Daniel with her family.



**Rabbi Dr. Zvi Ron** teaches Jewish Thought and Halakhah. While the first thing our students usually notice about Rav Ron is how amazingly laid-back and fun his shiurim are, the next thing they notice is the astounding breadth of his knowledge and his rare gift to make everything he says sound fascinating! His shiur on the thought of Ramchal, "Derech Hashem," is among the most beloved. Rav Ron has published numerous articles in both Hebrew and English in The Jewish Bible Quarterly, Hakirah, Tradition, Sinai, haMaayan and The Journal of Jewish Music and Liturgy and has published a book, Katan ve-Gadol. Rav Ron learned in Yeshivat Sha'alvim's Hesder Program and Kollel, received Semikhah from the Israeli Rabbanut, and earned a BA in Psychology at SUNY and a PhD in Jewish Theology at Spertus University. He served as Rabbi in Richmond, Virginia, from 1994 to 2004. In his spare time, Rav Ron is the artist of the Tales of our Homeland comic strip; appeared as a contestant on the game show "The Weakest Link"; and serves as Editor of the Jewish Bible Quarterly. He lives in Neve Daniel with his family.



**Rabbi Rafi Rosenblum** Rabbi Rafi Rosenblum teaches halachah and Jewish Thought. Rav Rafi earned a BA and semichah at Yeshiva University, where he also spent four years as a member of the Wexner Kollel Elyon. Rav Rafi taught at Rambam Mesivta in Lawrence and the Stella K. Abraham High School for Girls in Hewlett, and has taught at many seminaries and yeshivot in Israel. In his spare time, Rav Rafi can be found playing roller hockey, ultimate frisbee, a boardgame with his children, or whipping up a dessert in the kitchen. Rav Rafi made aliyah in 2010 and lives in Ramat Beit Shemesh with his family, who love it when students join them for Shabbos.



**Rav Efroni Schlesinger** teaches Machshevet Yisrael and Religious Zionism. Rav Efroni's shiurim are very source-based, and he looks to cover popular topics in breadth as well as depth. He runs the Shana Bet Program in Yeshivat Hakotel, where he has been learning under Rabbi Reuven Taragin for the last ten years. Rav Efroni served as a First Lt. in the IDF, after which he received Semicha from Rav Zalman Nechemia Goldberg and his Masters in Education from YU's Azrieli Graduate School. During the summer, Rav Efroni co-runs the Beit Midrash Program in Moshava IO. He also hosts a Philosophy Podcast, "Exploring Jewish Thought." Rav Efroni lives in Jerusalem with his wife Avigail.



**Mrs. Aliza Schwartz** is a Rakezet. Herself an alumna of Midreshet's Shana Aleph and Shana Bet programs, Aliza has a "been there myself" sense of how to relate to our students. She spends a lot of time in our Beit Midrash, offering chaburot (group chavrutot), learning one-on-one, and helping girls find something to learn on their own. Aliza's warmth, passion, genuineness and sincerity help her connect to the girls, and being one of the younger staff, she is a powerful role model for her students. Aliza holds a BA from Stern College in Tanach and Jewish Law. She and her family live in Jerusalem.



**Rav Ari Shvat** teaches Jewish Thought. Rav Ari's shiurim, infused with the inspirational and spiritual Torah of Rav Kook, are beloved by our students. Raised in Riverdale, NY, he did Hesder at Ohr Etzion and Kiryat Arba, where he received

semichah. Rav Ari is a popular international lecturer and has published many ideological and halachic articles, including the first scholarly book on the Israeli flag and the mitzvah to speak Hebrew. He holds a B.A. in Tanach from Michlelet Herzog and an M.A. in Jewish History and Talmud from Touro College. He enjoys utilizing his music as an educational medium and has produced three albums of original compositions, including a tune for Al HaMichya taught in the dati schools in Israel. Rav Ari has run various programs internationally for Bnei Akiva, as well as teaching at Midreshet HaRova, Midreshet Lindenbaum, Sha'alvim for Women and the Israeli Air Force. In addition, he is in charge of the archives of Rav Kook at Beit HaRav and is featured on the Yeshivat Beit El website. Rav Ari lives in Kochav HaShachar with his family.



**Rav Hanoch Teller** is a world-renowned storyteller and lecturer, known to many through his inspirational speaking in communities around the world and his many books on a wide range of topics and Jewish values. He has also produced two award-winning films. Rav Teller is able to bring gedolim to life for his students by recounting not only their Torah, but also their personal greatness in their midot and private everyday behavior. His unique course is a primer for life as to how to lead a life of moral sensitivity. Rav Teller earned a BA at Yeshiva University and continues to learn in the Mirrer Yeshiva.



**Mrs. Elisheva Weinberg** is a Rakezet. Originally from Los Angeles, Elisheva learned at Shaalvim for Women and earned a BA in psychology and Jewish Studies at Stern College. She taught and served as Program Director at the Lauder Midrasha in Berlin and has taught early education in New York and New Jersey. She lived in Riverdale and Bergenfield before making aliyah in 2021, and lives in Ramot with her husband Josh and their children.



**Mrs. Dena Terebello** is a Rakezet. Her signature warmth, humor and genuineness help her serve as a "mother away from home" to her girls. Her outgoing and caring personality helps her connect with every type of girl and makes her easily approachable. Dena was our (fantastic!) Em Bayyit for a number of years before joining our Rakezet team, has extensive experience working with young women over the past twenty years, and

is also a life coach. She lives in Yerushalayim with her family, within walking distance of Midreshet Moriah, and her home is open to everyone.



**Rabbi Eli Wagner** teaches Halachah and Jewish Thought. Rabbi Wagner learned at Yeshivat Sha'alvim, Yeshivat Derech Ha-Talmud, and in Rav Michael Rosenweig's shiur as a member of the YU Masmidim Honors Program. He earned a BA in psychology at Touro College and is studying towards an MA in Industrial Organizational Psychology at Touro University while he continues his learning at YU's Gruss Kollel. Rabbi Wagner has also taught at Yeshivat Sha'alvim, Sha'alvim for Women, and Yeshivat Torat Shraga. He and his family live in Yerushalayim.



**Rabbi "Y.Y." Wenglin** teaches Chasidut and Jewish Thought. Rav Wenglin's ultra-high-energy delivery, deep familiarity with Western culture, creativity and self-effacing humor enable him to share and inspire with provocative, life-changing concepts in emunah, midot, and connecting to God. Rav Wenglin earned a BA in History and Literature at Harvard and a JD at the UCLA School of Law, where he was a member of the Law Review (and a lead performer in the law school musical). After law school, Rabbi Wenglin first joined the Manhattan law firm of Paul, Weiss as a corporate associate in mergers and acquisitions, but then put all that on hold in order to learn more about his Jewish roots. He moved to Jerusalem, where he started taking introductory classes at Aish HaTorah, and the rest is history... Rabbi Wenglin teaches at yeshivot and seminaries and serves as a guest speaker for kiruv programs on campuses and communities all over. He and his family live in Ramat Beit Shemesh.



**Rav Aharon Wexler** is beloved by our students for his passion for Israel and the Jewish people and for his exciting, thought-provoking shiurim. He made aliyah from New York after high school and studied in Yeshivat HaKotel. After Yeshiva and his service in the IDF, Rav Aharon earned a BA in Archeology, semichah at Yeshivat HaKotel, an MA in Jewish History, and is now a Doctoral Candidate studying Jewish Philosophy. He is also a licensed tour guide, and when not teaching or touring, makes his home in Efrat with his family.







