

HOLY BLOSSOM TEMPLE



THE GERALD SCHWARTZ/
HEATHER REISMAN
CENTRE FOR JEWISH LEARNING AT
HOLY BLOSSOM TEMPLE

WINTER/SPRING 2012
CALENDAR OF EVENTS 5772



HOLY BLOSSOM TEMPLE

ק"ק פרחי קדש



Debbie Spiegel,
Director of Education

UNDERSTANDING WHAT YOU'VE ALWAYS KNOWN

Our sages wrote, “al shlosa devarim ha’olam omeid”---The world is sustained by three things. Tellingly, mentioned first is Torah, Jewish study and learning in the specific and broad senses. While Jewish literacy appears at an all time low, Holy Blossom has an impressive array of serious learners. Won't you join this growing group if you haven't already? You will enrich your life and that of our congregation's. That's a promise you can hold me to!

Have a look at our learning opportunities for this first part of 2012. And do so with the observation of Nobel Laureate Doris Lessing in mind, “That is what learning is. You suddenly understand something you've understood all your life, but in a new way”. So, come and learn something---Torah-- in a different way. You will learn what as a Jew you've always known!

All are welcome for every single class, lecture and more. We'd very much appreciate it if you'd register for the classes. To do so, please contact Elana Fehler, 416.789.3291, ext. 221.

ONGOING STUDY

On Shabbat

The Wisdom of the Talmud

Shabbat morning Torah Study with Rabbi John Moscovitz

Saturdays at 9:00 a.m.

As the Rabbis interpreted the Bible and constructed a new Judaism for very different times, they thought deeply as to how Jews, all people really, ought best live to achieve the sense of being part of something larger—of community, of purpose, of God.

All—beginners along with long-time learners—are welcome as we explore Rabbinic thinking on: our relationships with one another, friends, family, strangers; our relationship with God; how we use (or abuse) money, sexuality and work; how freedom and responsibility fit together; and the working out of our particularity as well as our broader humanity (the observance of ritual and of the Jewish calendar while living in the larger world).

Shabbat Meditation

Michelle Katz, Jewish Meditation Teacher and Spritual Director

Jan 28, Feb 25, March 31, April 28, May 26, at 10:15 a.m.

Please join a growing group of Jews in search of enhanced prayer and deeper connection with God. Using a variety of techniques for reflection and contemplation, we will learn texts of our tradition. We hope this elicits our response, our prayers as we listen differently.

Women's Rosh Hodesh Beit Midrash

Jan 21, Feb 25, March 24, April 21

Join us monthly after Shabbat Kiddush. We will gather to learn the weekly Torah portion with The Torah, A Women's Commentary.

ONGOING STUDY

During The Week

Advanced Hebrew Grammar

Rabbi Edward Goldfarb

Tuesdays at 11:00 a.m.

Do you want to parse the Hebrew Bible and discover its real meaning? Do you have a yen for Hebrew grammar and the Biblical text? Do join us.

Sisterhood Torah Study

Rabbi Edward Goldfarb

Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m.

How did the “Children of Israel” become the “Nation of Israel?” The Book of Exodus provides the narrative for this journey of a people’s emergence into History.

Yiddish Novel

Rabbi Edward Goldfarb

Wednesdays at 11:00 a.m.

Enjoy the best of Yiddish literature, read and translated with commentary. We are currently reading *Di Agunah* by Chaim Grade. The story is about a conflict between two rabbis who have diametrically different positions on whether a woman whose husband has disappeared may remarry.

Temple Singers

Cantor Benjamin Z. Maissner

Sundays at 10:00 a.m.

Our volunteer choir rehearses once a week and sings at least twice a month during Shabbat and holiday Services. Song at Holy Blossom is an integral part of the prayer service, which allows for participation in the religious life of our synagogue. Want to learn Jewish music and help your synagogue community in prayer? Contact Mari Lynn Rusak (ext. 224).



STUDY WITH OUR RABBIS



Rabbi John Moscowitz



Rabbi Yael Splansky



Rabbi Karen Thomashow

Introduction to Talmud III

Rabbi Karen Thomashow

Wednesdays, January 18-February 1 at 7:30 p.m.

In our tradition, the Talmud has been compared to a sea—vast, expansive, deep. There is much to learn from the wisdom of our rabbis who sought to expand upon the understanding of the laws of the Bible. Through the process, the rabbis left us with principles that while deduced from the law, may be applied to other time periods, persons, and life in general. This third incarnation of Talmud study will continue to explore the fascinating principles from the Talmud. No previous experience necessary.

Ethical Eating

Rabbi Yael Splansky

Wednesdays, March 28-April 11, at 7:30 p.m.

Are you what you eat?

Judaism has always had a lot to say about what to eat, what not to eat, and how to make the acts of preparing, eating, and sharing food sacred. Using sacred Jewish text and excerpts from Jonathan Safran Foer's book, "Eating Animals," we'll consider our foodways in light of environmental, social, health-conscious, religious, and ethical values.

Faith and the Faithless: How Belief May Take you By Surprise

Rabbi John Moscovitz

Tuesdays, April 3 - May 1, at 7:30 p.m.

What divergent and interesting thinkers---from Aviva Zornberg to David Horowitz, Joseph Soloveitchik to Naomi Levy---have to say about how faith may emerge when least expected and most necessary. Put differently, you don't have to start as a believer to gain faith. These five weeks will include a survey of what the great Jewish exponents of faith have to say, as well as an invitation to keep a personal journal of your own beliefs.

Sisterhood Kallah

The Spirit of the Mishnah: The Rabbis As Revolutionaries

Rabbi John Moscovitz

Thursday, May 3, at 9:30 a.m. at the Donalda Club

Few think of rabbis as revolutionaries, but the rabbis of the Talmudic Era surely were. Deliberately ignoring the ruins of the destroyed Jerusalem Temple over their shoulder, the rabbis looked instead both backward and forward, transforming a ruined Judaism into something virtually totally new: portable, intellectually focused, doing mitzvot rather than offering sacrifices. The Mishnah, the animating book of the Talmud, was their vehicle. Come and learn mishnayot you've never seen, but "know" very well.

For reservations contact: Elana Fehler, ext. 221

OUR COURSES AND PROGRAMS - 2012

Lost Scriptures -- Books That Never Made It Into Anyone's Bible

Dr. Barrie Wilson, Professor Emeritus, Humanities and Religious Studies, York University

Tuesdays, January 17-31, at 7:30 p.m.

Influential writings from the first two centuries BCE and CE that never made it into either the Hebrew Bible or the Christian Scriptures. The Jewish heroine Judith who single-handedly saves her people. Joseph the Patriarch and his Egyptian wife Aseneth. The messianic Psalms of Solomon (no, not the Psalms of David). Infancy tales about Jesus. Mary's own special birth and upbringing in the Temple. Mary Magdalene as the chief apostle. What Thecla did on hearing Paul preach. And others. We'll read from translations of the texts themselves.

Sunday Book Club

Sharon Singer, Facilitator

Sunday, January 22, at 10:30 a.m.

Our next book is *Invisible Bridge*, by Julie Orringer
Future Dates are: February 12, April 15, May 6

Texts and Textiles

Rabbi Michael Stroh

Rabbi emeritus Temple Har Zion

Mondays, January 23, 30,

**February 6, 13, 27, (not Feb.20), March 5,
at 7:30 p.m.**

Which texts are rarely studied by Reform Jews? Which texts are never studied by Reform Jews? Which texts are rarely studied by any Jews? How and can they speak to us?
Sponsored by Brotherhood

Beyond the Chuppah

David and Eileen Berger

**Thursdays, February 2 - March 8, (no class Feb 16),
at 8:00 p.m.**

This course is specifically designed for newly engaged and married couples.

Please reserve your place, call Hayley McAdam, ext. 246

Angels: What Can They Teach Us?

Dr. James Diamond, University of Waterloo

Thursdays, February 2-16, at 7:30 p.m.

Human beings frequently encounter angels in the Bible who often appear in times of crisis. These confrontations vary in the messages they convey and the way they materialize, ranging from desert travellers seeking shelter to mysterious forces that threaten physical violence. What role do these angels play? Is there a common thread that runs through the messages they communicate? Why do human beings need them? Why does God need them? Do angels have anything to teach us in the modern world?



Israel: A State of Exception?

Derek J. Penslar

Samuel Zacks Professor of Jewish History Associate
Chair, Department of History (2010-11)
University of Toronto



Derek J. Penslar

Wednesday, February 8, at 7:30 p.m.

Why does Israel receive so much attention in the media and international community? Why do its actions come under such harsh criticism?

This talk seeks to answer these questions, paying attention to reasons both intrinsic - what the state of Israel really is and does - and extrinsic - how it is perceived by others.



The Blessing of a B Minus: Using Jewish Teachings to Raise Resilient Teenagers.

An Evening with **Dr. Wendy Mogel**



Dr. Wendy Mogel

A congregation-wide event for all parents of tweens and teens.

Monday, February 13, at 6:30 p.m.

6:30 - Dessert Reception and Opening Remarks

7:00 - Dr. Wendy Mogel joins us via Skype

8:00 - Closing Remarks

Rabbis Yael Splansky and **Karen Thomashow** will introduce, moderate, and conclude the evening program. Dr. Mogel is well-known for her humour, her wisdom, her sensitivity, and her Jewish soul. She has a remarkable ability to give parents real confidence and relevant advice regarding a precious time period in the life of their children such as is teenagehood. This will be a tremendous evening.

Library Book Club

Dr. Janna Nadler

Director of Book Clubs by Janna, teacher

Join us as we discuss the following three books. We always look forward to our thoughtful discussions and meaningful conversations which arise from our readings.

**Thursdays, February 23, March 15, and May 17,
at 10:00 a.m.**

We will read the following:

Feb. 23, The Last Brother by Nathacha Appanah:

March 15 - Nemesis by Philip Roth

May 17 – Foreign Bodies by Cynthia Ozick

Treading The Middle Path Of Harmony And Balance

An Evening of Teaching and Meditation with
Rabbi Yoel Glick

Tuesday, March 13, at 7:30 p.m.

In the Kabbalah, the middle column of the Tree of Life is called the path of harmony and balance. In this talk, we learn how to walk in harmony along the middle path. We will learn how to balance mercy and judgment, soul and body, Heaven and Earth.

Sacred Waters and the Mikveh

Geri Durbin

ROM educator, Senior School teacher

Thursdays, March 22 & 29, at 10:30 a.m.

Judaism's ancient ritual - mikveh immersion is both sacred and intimate, a rejuvenation of the heart, soul and body. Join ROM educator Geri Durbin in this illustrated talk as she looks at the role of water in the early practice of ritual purity in Judaism.

Facing Dying and Death: A Journey of Discovery of Meaning and Purpose

Dr. Larry Librach

Director of the Joint Centre for Bioethics,
University of Toronto

Monday, April 16, at 7:30 p.m.

Welcome or not, dying is a natural part of our lives. How do we as a modern society approach the issue of dying and death? How do we as individuals prepare ourselves for our mortality and live our lives aware of this? Prepare our families to face grief and death? Prepare our children to understand dying and grief? How can the health care system respond to our needs for quality end of life care? In this lecture, Dr. Librach will explore in a very life affirming way how we can approach this topic of dying. Sponsored by Bikur Holim committee

Yom Hashoah Commemoration

Wednesday, April 18, at 7 pm



Anci Shafran

Temple member, Anci Shafran, fled her home in 1939 when she was eight years old. She spent the rest of her childhood in hiding or wandering through Czechoslovakia and Hungary until liberation came in 1945. A remarkable combination of ingenuity, scheming, hope, and a lot of luck led to her survival. Come and bear witness to her testimonial.

What I Believe: Thoughts and Insights From Forty-Six Years of Being a Rabbi

Rabbi Michael Stroh, Rabbi emeritus,
Temple Har Zion

Thursdays, April 19-May10, at 10:30 a.m.

Israel Seminar: Engaging Israel - Confronting the Difficult Questions

Mondays, April 23 to May 14, at 7:30 pm

Are Diaspora Jews become disenchanted or disinterested in the State of Israel, as some claim? Have Jews become uncomfortable with Israel's military power? How do we relate to a modern and economically vibrant Jewish State, who needs personal engagement more than charity?

Based on the Engaging Israel program from the world-renowned Shalom Hartman Institute, this year's Israel Seminar will challenge us to reflect on the most difficult questions about a modern Jewish State - from the

philosophical (what should a Jewish State look like?) to the real and practical (how do we reconcile with Occupation?).

Join **Rabbi John Moscovitz, Rabbi Karen Thomashow** and **Jeff Denaburg** for a timely and thought-provoking series, which will combine video talks from great Jewish thinkers with lively debate and discussion on these important topics.

The Shalom Hartman Institute is a leader in the development of Jewish thought in the modern age, intended to ensure Judaism's continued advancement and significance in the lives of modern Jews. The Hartman Institute is also a leading teacher of Judaism to Israeli educators, senior IDF officers and to Rabbis and lay leaders from across the world.

Yom HaZikaron / Yom Ha'Atzmaut "Festivale": A Real Yom Ha'Atzmaut Celebration

Wednesday, April 25

Save the Date – more information to follow.

Blanche and Harry Posen Memorial Lecture

Professor Gabi Ben Dor

Haifa University, Academic Adviser at Israel's National Defense College, whose mission is to develop excellence and professional skills on the strategic level for those who are designated to occupy senior positions in the IDF and the governmental establishment.

Tuesday and Wednesday, May 8 & 9, at 8:00 p.m.

**May 8: The Struggle For Mastery In The Middle
East**

May 9: The Politics Of Social Change In Israel

Tikkun Leil Shavuot

Professor Clifford Orwin

University of Toronto

Saturday, May 26, at 9:00 p.m.

"Will Not The Judge of all the World Do Justice?"

As Abraham once intervened with God on behalf of the righteous, can we do the same---or not? An Inquiry into Torah then and now.

Torah Lishma – Learn Torah For Its Own Sake

Wednesdays, May 30 – June 27, at 7:30 p.m.

May 30 - Parshat Hashavua, **Debbie Spiegel**

June 6 & 13 - Midrash, **Rabbi Yael Splansky**

June 20 & 27 - Talmud IV, **Rabbi Karen Thomashow**

This program is specifically designed for those who want more; Adult B'nei Mitzvah students, lovers of text; open to everyone. Join us!

Watch for...

...our next class for Adult B'nei Mitzvah beginning in October 2012 until June 2014.
Contact Debbie Spiegel for more details. 416.789.3291, ext. 239.

SCHWARTZ REISMAN CENTRE CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

Monday

January 23-March 5 (not on Feb 20)	7:30 p.m.	Texts and Textiles, Rabbi Michael Stroh
February 13	6:30 p.m.	The Blessing of a B Minus, Using Jewish Teachings to Raise Resilient Teenagers: an evening with Dr. Wendy Mogel
April 16	7:30 p.m.	Facing Dying and Death, Dr. Larry Librach, Bikur Holim Committee
April 23-May 14	7:30 p.m.	Israel Seminar

Tuesday

Weekly	11:00 a.m.	Advanced Hebrew Grammar, Rabbi Edward Goldfarb
January 17-31	7:30 p.m.	Lost Scriptures, Prof. Barrie Wilson
March 13	7:30 p.m.	Treading The Middle Path Of Harmony And Balance - An Evening of Teaching and Meditation, Rabbi Yoel Glick
April 3- May 1	7:30 p.m.	Faith and Faithless, How Belief May Take you by Surprise, Rabbi Moscowitz
May 8	8:00 p.m.	Blanche and Harry Posen Memorial Lecture, Prof. Gabi Ben-Dor

Wednesday

Weekly	9:30 a.m.	Sisterhood Torah Study, Rabbi Edward Goldfarb
Weekly	11:00 a.m.	Yiddish Novel, Rabbi Edward Goldfarb
January 18-February 1	7:30 p.m.	Introduction to Talmud III, Rabbi Karen Thomashow
February 8	7:30 p.m.	Israel: A State of Exception?, Prof. Derek J. Penslar
March 28-April 1	7:30 p.m.	Ethical Eating, Rabbi Yael Splansky
April 18	7:30 p.m.	Yom HaShoah Commemoration, Ancie Shafran
April 25		Festivale: A Real Yom Ha'Atzmaut Celebration Yom Hazikaron Commemoration and Yom Ha'Atmaut celebration. More information to follow
May 9	8:00 p.m.	Blanche and Harry Posen Memorial Lecture, Prof. Gabi Ben-Dor
May 30-June 27	7:30 p.m.	Torah Lishma, Learn Torah for its Own Sake

Thursday

February 2-March 8, (not Feb 16)	8:00 p.m.	Beyond the Chuppah, David and Eileen Berger
February 2-16	7:30 p.m.	Angels: What Can They Teach Us?, Dr. James Diamond
February 23, March 15, May 17	10:00 a.m.	Library Book Club, Dr. Janna Nadler
March 22-29	10:30 a.m.	Sacred Waters and the Mikveh, Geri Durbin
April 19-May 10	10:30 a.m.	What I Believe: Thoughts From 46 years of Being a Rabbi, Rabbi Michael Stroh
May 3	9:30 a.m.	Sisterhood Kallah, The Spirit of the Mishnah, Rabbi Moscowitz, Donald Club

Saturday

Weekly	9:00 a.m.	The Wisdom of the Talmud, Weekly Torah Study, Rabbi John Moscovitz
January 28, February 25, March 31, April 28, May 26	10:15 a.m.	Shabbat Meditation, Michelle Katz
January 21, February 25, March 24, April 21	1:00 p.m.	Women's Rosh Hodesh Beit Midrash, after Kiddush
May 26	9:00 p.m.	Tikkun Leil Shavuot, Prof. Clifford Orwin

Sunday

Weekly	10:00 a.m.	Temple Singers, Cantor Maissner
January 22, February 12, April 15, May 6	10:30 a.m.	Sunday Book Club, Sharon Singer

