

Torathon... and beyond!



“A Journey into Jewish Life and Learning”

A wonderful evening
of study, discussions
and “how to”
workshops
featuring the area’s
distinguished rabbis,
cantors, educators
and community
leaders.

Generously supported by

The Siegel Family Cultural Fund in memory of
Bernice and Albert Chaiken & Arthur Siegel

and

The Rotman Family Foundation in memory of
Murray Rotman

Saturday, November 7, 2009

21 Cheshvan 5770

5:30 P.M. – 10:30 P.M.

Registration begins. Refreshments to follow

CONGREGATION BETH ISRAEL

15 Jamesbury Drive, Worcester, MA



*“A Tapestry of Jewish Life” program funded by the
Jewish Federation of Central Massachusetts*

“dedicated to the preservation and enrichment of Jewish life.”

Torathon... and beyond!

ALEPH 6:30 P.M. – 7:20 P.M.

A1. TAKING A "BIG PICTURE" VIEW OF JEWISH HISTORY

How do we see the last 2000 years of Jewish history; as cyclical in nature or is there a pessimistic/optimistic trend? Part of our discussion will examine the fascinating writings of author David R. Slavitt.

RABBI SETH L. BERNSTEIN, D. MIN., Temple Sinai

A2. SONGS OF SEPHARAD – A TASTE OF LADINO MUSIC

Ladino is the folk language of the Sephardic Jews, roughly equivalent to Yiddish in the Ashkenazi world. Come learn Ladino songs for Shabbat and holidays, and maybe a romantic ballad or two.

CANTOR KIM SINGER, Temple Sinai

A3. THE JEWISH CALENDAR: HOW DOES IT WORK SO WELL?

Every holiday of our Jewish calendar fits perfectly like Yom Kippur never falls on Friday or Sunday. None of this would work with a civil calendar. How does our Jewish calendar marvelously match up year-by-year with the astronomical cycles of the sun, moon, and earth?

LES BLATT, Temple Sinai

A4. WHY MADOFF MATTERS: A PANEL DISCUSSION

The immense damage inflicted on so many individuals and institutions by Bernard Madoff troubles us on many levels, not least of which as Jews. How could this scandal have happened and why? Is there a "Jewish" response? Has all this fueled the fires of anti-Semitism?

JORDAN LEVY, former Mayor and businessman, presently radio talk-show host, RABBI JOEL PITKOWSKY, Congregation Beth Israel, DERREK SHULMAN, Regional Director, The Anti Defamation League, (ADL), BERNIE ROTMAN, Moderator

A5. THE JEWISH RENEWAL MOVEMENT

Jewish Renewal is a recent movement in Judaism which integrates modern Judaism with mystical, Hasidic, musical, and meditative practices. In this experiential session, participants will be introduced to Jewish Renewal through the use of Hebrew chant and meditation techniques.

JOSEF KOTTLER, Congregation B'nai Shalom.

A6. BASIC JUDAISM...WHILE STANDING ON ONE FOOT!

The Talmud speaks of a skeptic who wants to learn all of the Torah while "standing on one foot." While we won't be able to learn everything about Judaism in this session, you will walk away with a good understanding of the core principles of Judaism.

ME'IR SHERER, MJE, MSW, Director of Congregational Learning, Congregation Beth Israel

A7. FATHER ABRAHAM SPEAKS TO HIS CHILDREN; MUSLIMS AND JEWS

Islam and Judaism have much in common, not least of which is their common forefather, Abraham. When is the faith of these "cousins" shared and when does it separate? Looking into the future, what are the real prospects for "peace in the family?"

DR. MOHAMED LAZZOUNI, an expert on Islam, holds a PhD in Physics from Oxford University and is a visiting professor, Jesuit Institute of Boston College.

REGISTRATION ONGOING

Begins at 5:30 P.M.

HAVDALAH SERVICE

6:00 P.M.

Please Note:

- Some classrooms will have limited seating. Arrive early to ensure a seat. Please be prepared with 2nd and 3rd choices in mind.
- People will be available at the registration tables to assist you with all the room assignments.
- A number of new courses (and course changes) may be set following the printing of this brochure. Please check the website or at the at the registration table for details.
- View more detailed class descriptions on the website at www.jewishcentralmass.org/torathon

TEENAGER PROGRAM

will be offered for 8th-12th graders. For details:

www.jewishcentralmass.org/torathon

INFORMATION BOOTHS

-Ongoing in the Social Hall-

These tables which represent many of our local synagogues, agencies and institutions will be available for your interest. Wonderful Jewish books authored by our Torathon teachers will also be available. These make great gifts for Chanukah, celebrated December 11th.

BET 7:30 P.M. – 8:20 P.M.

B1. THE "REAL" CHANUKAH STORY

Prior to the Maccabean battles in the 2nd century B.C.E., there was Hellenistic Reform followed by great upheaval. How anti-Semitic was that Reform and to what extent did it encourage Jews to assimilate into Greek society? How relevant is all that to our Chanukah holiday today?

RABBI SETH L. BERNSTEIN, D.Min., Temple Sinai

B2. ISRAELI DANCING

Learn traditional Israeli dances from the days of the first Israeli pioneers. These dances consist mainly of circle and partner dances of Eastern European, Arab and Yemenite origin.

SAUL AND REENA SLOVIN, Israeli Folk Dance Teachers

B3. HEBREW SUPERNOVA: THE PHENOMENON OF AVRAHAM SHLONSKY'S POETRY

Avraham Shlonsky was influential in the development of modern Hebrew and its literature in Israel through his many acclaimed translations of literary classics, particularly from Russian. A sampling of Shlonsky's fascinating poems will be read in the original and in translation.

JOEL SIEGELMAN, Local Jewish Educator

B4. WHO MADE GOD ANYWAY?!

Children of different ages can ask some interesting (and challenging) questions about God and other aspects of spiritual life. At times, the answers come to us quickly and can be quite simple. At other times, their questions prompt us to explore and evaluate our own beliefs. Let's discuss.

BETH GREENBERG, Ph.D., Licensed Clinical Psychologist, Jewish Family Service of Worcester, Inc.

B5. A PALESTINIAN STATE NEXT TO ISRAEL?

In September, a group of Israeli and Palestinian activists completed years of studying the question of how, exactly, could a Palestinian state exist alongside Israel? Their fascinating 400 page report has caused quite a stir. Is that plan realistic? Just what needs to happen next to advance true peace?

LARRY LOWENTHAL, National Senior Advisor to the American Jewish Committee

B6. JEWISH NOVELS AND SHORT STORIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

An introduction to extraordinary and spell binding Jewish fiction from Brazil, Argentina, Montenegro, Poland, The Netherlands and Peru. These amazing novels and short stories provide intriguing and often surprising perspectives on Jewish life. Lets learn together.

STEPHEN A. SADOW, Ph.D., Professor at Northeastern University

B7. THE CHASSIDIC PHILOSOPHY FOR MODERN TIMES

The genius of Chassidism has been its ability to take age-old Jewish values and bring them actively into the lives of contemporary Jews. Join this beloved rabbi and teacher in discussing the eternal principles of faith in One God, the spark of Godliness from within, and how Jews strive for unity with others and the world.

RABBI HERSHEL FOGELMAN, Yeshiva Achei T'mimim

B8. LIGHT AND LOVE: HOW OUR ANCESTORS CAME TO UNDERSTAND GOD AND THE EXPERIENCE OF SINAI

The two blessings before the Shema thank God for light and love. Why are these two "natural" concepts included in our prayers each day? What do they tell us about how to think about God and how we can encounter God through mindfulness each day? We will also examine the spiritual and personal side of prayer.

RABBI CHERIE KOLLER-FOX, Rabbi at Newton-Wellesley and Beth Israel Hospitals. Founder and past national chair of CAJE and Rabbi Emerita of Congregation Eitz Chayim, Cambridge, MA

B9. FAMOUS AND NOT SO FAMOUS WOMEN

While not that well known, Jewish history is replete with fascinating accounts of how certain women "made the difference" in their particular time and place.

This discussion will focus on the role that famous and not so famous Jewish women have played in different aspects of our history.

WENDY DAVIS-WONG, Temple Sinai Principal.

B10. WHEN IS IT AGAINST THE LAW TO HATE?

In this internet age we are exposed to all kinds of words and all shades of opinions on a daily basis, some quite outlandish. When do we cross the line? What is the difference between a hate incident or hate speech and an actual hate crime? When does it become Anti-Semitism?

ROBERT TRESTAN, Eastern States Civil Rights Counsel for the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) provides hate crime training to law enforcement agencies in Massachusetts and throughout the country.

B11. ABORTION: THE JEWISH VIEWS BOTH ANCIENT AND MODERN

Using the Torah, Talmud, Rashi, Rambam along with some modern interpretations we will discuss: When life begins? Mother or child? Who takes precedence? The process our Sages and Rabbis used in understanding and explaining the Torah.

RABBI ALAN ALPERT, Congregation Agudat Achim, Leominster

B12. THE GENERATIONS AFTER: THE UNIQUE ROLE OF CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

More than 60 years after the Holocaust, the Second and Third Generations of survivors find themselves in a unique position to assume a primary role in Holocaust remembrance. What are the experiences of these "Generations After" and what are they doing to keep the memory alive?

ELIZABETH ANTHONY, M.S.W., is the former Deputy Director of Survivor Affairs at the United States Holocaust Museum and presently a Doctoral Student, at the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Clark University.

GIMEL 8:30 P.M. – 9:20 P.M.**C1. BEING A GRANDPARENT IN AN INTERFAITH FAMILY**

When children intermarry, parents and grandparents wonder how they will connect to their grandchildren. This session will give grandparents and prospective grandparents the opportunity to share and acquire helpful tools for building relationships with their grandchildren around Jewish learning and identity. RABBI LEV BAESH, Consultant at Interfaith family.com and Rabbi at B'nai Or, Newton MA

C2. YEHUDA AMICHAI: THE VOICE OF A JEWISH NATION

If the State of Israel had a poet laureate, Yehuda Amichai would have been offered a lifetime contract. His poetry expressed the soul of a nation through its birth and struggles. After a brief overview of his life and work we will read several of his fascinating poems. (Hebrew knowledge not required). RABBI MICHAEL SWARTTZ, Beth Tikvah Synagogue

C3. A TASTE OF TALMUD

After the Torah and the rest of the Bible, the most quoted Jewish text is the Talmud. What is it? How did it come to be so important? This session will also give you a rare opportunity to study and discuss sections of the Talmud with a noted, local Talmud teacher. (No prior Talmud knowledge necessary.) GABE MOSKOVITZ, Local Jewish Educator

C4. HOW JEWS AND CHRISTIANS READ THE SAME BIBLE THROUGH DIFFERENT EYES

The "Judeo-Christian Tradition" implies that Jews and Christians share a common understanding of the Bible. While it is true that we share important figures like Abraham and Moses, Jews and Christians do not read the text of the "Old Testament" (Hebrew Bible) the same way at all. Each religion has different expectations and therefore, different outcomes. This is in large part because we have different understandings about God. Let's explore. EVERETT FOX PhD, Allen M. Glick Professor of Judaic and Biblical Studies at Clark University

C5. THE MOUSE THAT ROARS: ISRAEL A GLOBAL ECONOMIC POWERHOUSE

This tiny Jewish state has quietly emerged as one of the leading producers of technology in the world, and its innovative ecosystem stands to dominate the world stage. Hear about the innovation, the anecdotes, and the "joys" of one who does business in Israel, with Israelis. STEVE SCHUSTER, Temple Sinai

C6. MIKVAH MYSTIQUE

What is Family Purity, and why does Judaism place so much emphasis on it? Explore the fascinating history of the Mikvah, as well as its dramatic resurgence in popularity in modern times. What does it mean for the future of Jewish communities around the world? DVORA GREEN, Chabad of Westboro

C7. THE HEALTHCARE DEBATE: "IS IT GOOD FOR THE JEWS?"

The Declaration of Independence claims that we are all entitled to "certain unalienable rights" including "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Should Health Care be on that list? Why? Why not? How does Judaism shed light on this vigorous nationwide debate? Let's discuss! RABBI JOEL PITKOWSKY, Congregation Beth Israel

C8. OUR LOCAL JEWISH COMMUNITY: LOOKING INTO A CRYSTAL BALL

The decade of the 2010's will bring many challenges to our local Jewish Community: demographically, financially, religiously and strategically. How are we poised to meet those challenges so as to ensure a strong and vibrant community for years to come. Let's discuss! HOWARD BORER, Executive Director, Jewish Federation of Central Massachusetts

C9. TAKE A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY WITH THE HASIDIC MASTERS

The Hasidic Masters offered readings of the Torah very different from the more evident and conventional understanding of that sacred text. Examining passages from the Hasidism's classical period, we will explore the way Hasidism approached and understood the Torah. CANTOR MARINA SHEMESH, Congregation Beth Israel

C10. THE ANCIENT ART OF HEBREW CALLIGRAPHY

In this hands on class, you will begin to learn the ancient art of forming Hebrew letters, and a little about the mystical and rabbinic interpretations of the letters. Resources to help you continue to practice what you have learned will be provided. Limited to 12 students. DR. MARGOT BARNET, Chiropractor and Temple Emanuel Lay Leader

MINI SESSIONS (Choose up to 3. Each session will repeat every 18 minutes)**CM1. FINDING "JEWISH" ON THE INTERNET**

There are a number of new and excellent internet sites to answer any questions you have about "Jewish." Get a preview of the best ones with a list to take home with you. ARIEL DAGAN, Local Jewish Educator

CM2. HOW TO PUBLICIZE YOUR JEWISH EVENT

Learn to achieve successful P.R., both in writing, preparing, and disseminating your publicity as well as having it successfully aired in the various media outlets, and the social web. Handouts available. BOBBIE CHASE, Local Social Activist.

CM3. MAKE YOUR OWN "MIZRACH"

When we pray, our Jewish tradition bids us to face east (mizrach) towards Jerusalem. Some homes have an ornamental piece of art on their eastern wall which is called...you guessed it! SUSAN LEVITAN, Local Jewish Educator

CM4. A SOFER or JEWISH SCRIBE, WHAT EXACTLY DOES HE DO?

In addition to artistic ability, there are very particular laws and regulations that a Sofer or Jewish scribe must follow in order for his Torah, ketubah, or mezuzah to be considered "kosher." See and learn from our local expert. DOVID LIPSCHITZ, Professional Scribe.

CM5. LEARN TO BRAID THE "PERFECT" CHALLAH

Have you ever seen the "perfect" challah and wonder how it is done? Join this hands-on mini session and become the "perfect" challah braider. ELIOT SOMMER, Congregation Beth Israel

CM6. THE PERFECT LATKE

With Hanukah right around the corner, how great would it be to learn, literally hands-on, how to make this traditional treat. You and others can also "eat the fruit of your labors." Enjoy!

TO BE ANNOUNCED

DALET 9:30 P.M. – 10:20 P.M.**D1. JEWISH MEDITATION**

Guided, mindfulness meditation allows us to focus on the miracle of breathing. A quieted mind prepares us for prayer. It cultivates a steadiness of attention and loving-kindness. This way invites an awareness of the presence of God to enter in each moment.

ELANA ROSENBAUM, noted local instructor in Mindfulness Meditation

D2. A TASTE OF MAMEH LOSHEN

Enjoy a typical, hands-on Yiddish class with plenty of humorous anecdotes, conversation and singing. This class is for those who know a bissel Yiddish or just love the sound of it.

HAROLD GURWITZ, Congregation Beth Israel

D3. "JOINING THE TRIBE": THE UNIQUE EXPERIENCE OF CONVERSION

Who, when, how, why? Come and discuss your experiences, your expectations, your concerns. Come if you have converted, want to convert, or want to understand how and why others convert. This is wide open discussion!

EMMA ROOT, Congregation B'nai Shalom

D4. MUSIC FOR OUR SOULS

Join us for a joyful, participatory sing-along session in the "camp" tradition. If you've been to Jewish camp, you know how uplifting song sessions are; if you haven't, you are in for a treat! No musical talent necessary...just bring an open heart.

LISA MARCUS-JONES, Cantorial Soloist, Congregation B'nai Shalom & Temple Beth Shalom, Needham, MA

D5. IN A DOWN ECONOMY; HELPING OURSELVES AND HELPING EACH OTHER

Created in the spring of 2009, THE WORCESTER CENTRAL MASS CONNECTIONS and THE COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO THE RECESSION is a coalition of multiple synagogues and Jewish organizations formed to help those in the community who are facing difficulties during the economic downturn. Find out about ongoing and planned efforts to provide support, information and resources for those dealing with unemployment or underemployment and its consequences. (A WCMC table in the social hall will provide further information.)

LAURIE PORTER, Temple Emanuel, STEPHEN SLATEN, Director of Jewish Family Services of Worcester, MARA YEROW, Temple Emanuel and MINDY HALL, Congregation B'nai Shalom

D6. SKINNING MY KNEES ON MY FAMILY TREE

Would you like to develop your own Family Tree? Almost ten years ago I decided to explore my roots. In this session I will share what worked and what didn't as well as some other lessons learned.

BOB SIEGEL, Jewish Genealogist

D7. FASCINATING JEWISH LITERATURE FROM NORTH OF THE BORDER

Leonard Cohen, Mordecai Richler and A.M. Klein, are just a few of the familiar names representing the very best of Canadian Jewish Literature. Let's enjoy together the rich legacy of Canadian Anglo-Jewish Literature.

MARCIA TANNENBAUM, A local attorney who lived in Canada from 1981 – 1986 where she was at Judaic teacher, a legal consultant and served as Principal of the Ottawa Talmud Torah.

D8. MAN TALK: A WORKSHOP FOR MEN ONLY!

Men don't often have an opportunity to talk about themselves and about many topics in an arena with only men. When men are alone together, they create a safe space for themselves to talk candidly without judgment and without caution. We will also look at Jewish scripture and prayer as a metaphor for men's roles.

MITCH GORDON, Congregation B'nai Shalom

D9. BRACHOS (BLESSINGS) BEHIND BARS

Jews and Judaism in our prison system; who's there and why? What about recent news accounts about famous and not so famous Jews going to prison? What does Judaism say about how we should react or not react to those incarcerated? Learn from and discuss with this local expert.

RABBI YAAKOV BLOTNER, Rabbi of Shaarai Torah West Synagogue and Senior Chaplain of the State Department of Corrections

D10. THE ART OF CHASIDIC STORYTELLING

Explore the wondrous world of Chasidic storytelling. From ordinary peddlars and wagon drivers of the shtetl emerge tales of rich and passionate purpose and timeless lessons that captivate our imagination even today. Storytelling is a transformative experience and inner window to the soul.

RABBI MICHOEL GREEN, Chabad of Westboro

D11. LET'S SPEAK HEBREW

Even if you know but a few words in Hebrew, at the end of this 50 minute session, this wonderful Hebrew teacher will have you speaking "Lashon HaKodesh" or Hebrew like an Israeli (almost) and having a lot of fun in the process. This is your chance...try it!

ZIVA ROSENHAND, Local Jewish Educator.

SOCIAL HOUR

Starting at 8:30 in the Social hall, you can shmooze with your teachers and fellow students and enjoy wonderful refreshments.

TORATHON EVALUATIONS

Be sure to fill them out with your suggestions and drop them off in the boxes placed throughout the Social hall. Please indicate if you would like to serve on next year's Torathon Planning Committee.

Saturday Evening, November 7, 2009

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The Jewish Federation of Central Massachusetts
633 Salisbury St., Worcester, MA 01609

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
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at 13 locations (see back page) or online, www.jewishcentralmass.org/torathon

Advanced tickets now available

Torathon...and beyond!

Brochure and tickets are available at these locations, or
www.jewishcentralmass.org/torathon

Agudat Achim 268 Washington St. Leominster	Beth Tikvah Synagogue 44 Oak Street Westboro	Chabad of Westboro 54 South Street Westboro	Clark Hillel 950 Main Street Worcester	Congregation Beth Israel Jamesbury Dr. Worcester	Congregation B'nai Shalom 117 E. Main Street Westboro	Jewish Federation of Central Massachusetts 633 Salisbury Street Worcester
Shaarai Torah West 835 Pleasant Street Worcester	Temple Emanuel 280 May Street Worcester	Temple Sinai 661 Salisbury Street Worcester	Westboro Area Jewish Community Center 45 Oak Street Westboro	Worcester Jewish Community Center <small>at the Frances & Jacob Hiatt Bldg.</small> 633 Salisbury St. Worcester	Yeshiva Achei Tmimim 22 Newton Avenue Worcester	

Purchase tickets online at
www.jewishcentralmass.org/torathon

Advance Tickets
(on or before Thursday, November 5, 2009)
\$13

**Tickets
at the Door**
\$18

**High School &
College Students**
\$10

**For Additional Information and Transportation Assistance
Call The Jewish Federation of Central Massachusetts...
(508) 756-1543**



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