

**JUNE 8, 2019**

# SHAVUOT ACROSS BROOKLYN

**ALL-NIGHT CELEBRATION SPONSORED BY:**

Altshul, Base BKLYN, Beloved, Brooklyn Beit Midrash, Brooklyn Jews, Congregation Beth Elohim, Idra: House of Coffee/Culture/Learning, Hannah Senesh Community Day School, Kane Street Synagogue, Kavod: A Brooklyn Partnership Minyan, Kolot Chayeinu/Voices of Our Lives, Mishkan Minyan, Park Slope Jewish Center, Prospect Heights Shul, Repair the World NYC, Romemu Brooklyn, Shir HaMaalot, UJA-Federation of New York, and Union Temple of Brooklyn

**#ShavuotAcrossBrooklyn**



[cbebk.org](http://cbebk.org)



[@cbebk](https://www.instagram.com/cbebk)



[/cbebk](https://www.facebook.com/cbebk)

## Schedule at a Glance

### 8:00 PM

Keynote Session with author Nathan Englander (Sanctuary)  
Doors open at 7:30pm

### 9:15 PM

Services:

Clergy-led Contemporary Musical Service (Sanctuary)  
Traditional/Egalitarian Service (Rotunda)  
Orthodox Service (Chapel)

### 10:00 PM

Cheesecake in the Social Hall

### 10:30 PM Onward

Learning throughout the building

**Each session is 60 minutes, followed by a 5 minute break**

\*\*asterisks are next to sessions that use instruments, electricity, or writing

#### 10:30 PM Learning Block 1

- History and Mystery of Tikkun Leil Shavuot with Basya Schechter (Brosh)\*\*
- Psalm Study Marathon with Barat Ellman (Rimon)
- Halakha's Attitude Toward Transgender and Transsexual Inclusion with Ysoscher Katz (Study)
- Love Like a Tree with Sara Luria (Erez)
- The Torah of Pleasure, Joy, and the Erotic with Rachel Timoner (Chapel)
- First Impressions: What the beginning of our sacred texts teaches us with Josh Weinberg (Shaked)
- Amos and Moral Torah with David Kline (Limon)
- The Torah Before The Torah with Jon Leener (Zayit)
- Torah for the People: Autonomy & Authority in the Internet Age with Daniel Septimus (Livneh)
- Baghdad 1941: Examining the Farhud with Naomi Rabeeya and Hillel Gruenberg (Eshel)
- The Queerness of Portnoy's Complaint with Warren Hoffman (Alon)
- How to Mourn AND Organize: Jewish Best Practices for Community Response to Collective Trauma with Regina Sandler-Phillips (Boardroom)
- Making an Offer We Can't Refuse: Accepting the Torah with Aileen Heiman (Sensory)

#### 11:35 PM Learning Block 2

- Israeli Dancing with Rina Rinkewich (Basketball Court)\*\*
- Psalm Study Marathon Pt. II with Barat Ellman (Rimon)
- The Problem of Our Existence: Creation; Separation; Adam; The Woman; Alienation; Mercy with Ayal Robkin (Limon)
- To Kohelet, A Butterfly with Sam Reinstein (Eshel)
- Yoga with Rebecca Epstein (Study)\*\*
- 2nd Beginning & The Women of the Exodus with Michal Kohane (Livneh)
- The Yemeni Children Affair: Mizrahi Experiences in Israel/Palestine, 1948-1967 with Ethan Cohen and Asaf Calderon (Zayit)\*\*

- Ruth and Naomi: Creating a Family with Carie Carter (Chapel)
- Ben Zoma's deliberate misinterpretations" in Avot 4:1 with Aryeh Ethan Falk (Shaked)
- Forget!: The Radical Influence of Nietzsche on Modern Jewish Thought with Joe Schwartz (Alon)
- Reading Between Revelation and Law with Michele Chinitz (Brosh)
- Bein Kodesh LeChol: Building a Mindful Connection to the Ritual of Havdalah with Phyllis Sussman and Laura Marder (Erez)\*\*
- Take a Look at Habbakuk with Larry Magarik (Boardroom)

### 12:40 AM Learning Block 3

- Ba'yamim ha'heim bizman ha'zeh (then and now): the halakhic status of Shotah (the mentally disabled) pre and post Freud with Ysoscher Katz (Study)
- Diaspora: Authentic Judaism with Barat Ellman (Rimon)
- Pirkei Avot: Rabbis and Revelation with Jason Gitlin (Boardroom)
- Does Service Matter? with Riki Robinson, Jaz Twersky, and Josh Flink (Alon)\*\*
- Queer Undefined: Creating a Crowdsourced LGBTQ+ Dictionary with Sara Goldstein-Weiss (Zayit)
- "We Don't Trade Lives, Vision": A Halakhic view of Avengers Infinity War with Sam Reinstein (Eshel)
- "A love without reproof is not love:" The Challenging (Jewish) Art of Giving and Receiving Feedback with Marisa Harford (Chapel)
- Reconstructing Zionism with Barak Sella and Deborah Secular (Shaked)\*\*

### 1:45 AM Learning Block 4

- The Jews are Coming! With Josh Weinberg (Shaked)\*\*
- Shotah - Exemption or Exclusion: Disability, Identity, & the Pursuit of Acceptance in Jewish Texts with Sheryl Jaffe (Chapel)
- Learning from Ants and Sages Alike: Biomimicry and Social Change with Rena Branson (Zayit)
- Spring up! The Mystery Songs of Sefer Bamidbar with Josh Breitzer (Erez)
- Floods as Mirrors: A Comparative Analysis of Ancient Flood Stories with Hannah Grossman (Alon)
- Sholom Aleichem: A Life Well Lived with Jan Huttner (Boardroom)
- A Donkey's Horn & A Field of Knives with Michal Kohane (Livneh)
- The Fiftieth Day: Now What? A Roundup of Omer Counters with Regina Sandler-Phillips (Study)

### 2:50 AM Learning Block 5

- Who Commands the Commandments? with Matt Green (Study)
- What's Bothering Rashi (when he reads The Lord of the Rings): Understanding mefarshim through a Tolkien lens, with Amelia Wolf (Alon)
- Exploring Grief Narratives through the Book of Ruth with Rachel Bergstein (Boardroom)
- From Sinai to Psychedelics: Can we Embody Revelation in our World Today? With Rische Groner (Chapel)
- Our Two Way Relationship with Hashem with Shlomo Fingerer-Singer (Zayit)

### 3:55 AM Learning Block 6

- Sunday Morning Coming Up Nigun Session with Russ Agdern (Chapel)
- "Midnight Mindfulness" with Hannah Grossman (Study)
- Unsung Heroines: Examining Three Historic Female Cantors with Lianna Mendelson (Shaked)\*\*

**Join us for Sunrise Shavuot morning services in the CBE Chapel at 5:00 AM.**

### **Locations:**

**The Study:** 1<sup>st</sup> floor off the lobby (to the left)

**Boardroom:** 1<sup>st</sup> floor off the lobby (to the right)

**Chapel:** 1<sup>st</sup> floor as you walk in the Garfield entrance

**Social Hall:** 1<sup>st</sup> floor, next to the bathrooms as you are walking toward the lobby

**Basketball Court:** basement level, down the staircase near the entrance to the building

2<sup>nd</sup> floor Classrooms:

**Zayit**, at the top of the back staircase on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, across from bathrooms

3<sup>rd</sup> floor Classrooms:

**Rimon, Limon, or Shaked;** 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, each classroom has a sign indicating Rimon (Pomegranate), Limon (Lemon) or Shaked (Almond)

4th Floor Classrooms:

**Alon, Brosh, Sensory, Eshel, Erez, or Livneh;** At the very top of the front staircase move right. Rooms 408 (Brosh) and 431 (Eshel) are across the hall from one another. Room 435 (Livneh) is right up the front stairs on the right. Room 409 (Erez) is up the front stairs to the left and around the corner. Room 417 (Alon) is in the back corner. Sensory is in the middle of the building with a view of the courtyard, across the hall from Alon.

## SCHEDULE

### 8:00PM

Keynote Discussion with author Nathan Englander  
Doors open at 7:30pm

### 9:15PM

Services:  
Clergy-led Contemporary Musical Service (Sanctuary)  
Traditional/Egalitarian Service (Rotunda)  
Orthodox Service (Chapel)

### 10:00 PM

Cheesecake in the Social Hall

### 10:30 PM Onward

Learning throughout the building  
**Each session is 60 minutes, followed by a 5 minute break**

## DESCRIPTIONS AND BIOS

See first pages for locations

\*asterisks are next to sessions that use instruments, electricity, or writing

### BLOCK ONE: 10:30 PM

#### [History and Mystery of Tikkun Leil Shavuot with Basya Schechter\\*\\*](#)

We will recount the incredible story of the very first time Kabbalist gathered to stay up all night for a Tikkun Leil Shavuot in Salonika, Greece in 1533 with Joseph Karo and Shlomo Alkabez (composer of Lecha Dodi) officiating the group of seekers, and taking their cues from the Zohar. The story, full of magic, divination, prophecy, will be told through Kirtan chants, poetry and song.

*BIO: Basya Schechter is best known for her group, Pharaoh's Daughter, a 7 piece world music ensemble that travels effortlessly through continents, key signatures, and languages with a genre-bending sound. Basya's earthy, soulful voice rings over textured instrumentation providing an east meets west harmonious vision of creative peace and vibrant diversity. She is also the Hazzan of Romemu's progressive community on UWS, as well as the the spiritual leader of the Romemu Brooklyn Satellite Community. In the summer, Basya is the Cantor for Fire Island Synagogue, a smaller, flip flop wearing community co-led with banjo playing Rabbi, writer and scholar, Shaul Magid. Basya's most recent creative work is with Darshan, a musical midrash project in collaboration with esoteric indie rapper/poet Eden Pearlstein (aka ePRHYME).*

---

#### [Psalm Study Marathon with Barat Ellman](#)

The project of reading and studying each psalm in the Tanakh in order began more than three years ago. This session picks up where we left off last year. We will cover as many psalms as the session allows. The psalms will be studied in English with Hebrew texts provided as well. No knowledge of Hebrew nor prior knowledge, however is necessary.

*BIO: Dr. Rabbi Barat Ellman (JTS, '04, '11) is a scholar of Hebrew Bible. Her areas of research interests include: biblical religion and theology, the social world reflected in the Bible, and ways to draw upon biblical material in contemporary social justice work. She is the author of Memory and Covenant: The Role of Israel's and God's Memory in Sustaining the Deuteronomistic and Priestly Covenants (Fortress, 2013), and she is currently working on developing a pedagogy for using theology and Scripture to teach about racism and criminal. A Wexner Graduate Fellow and a member of Phi Beta Kappa, Dr. Ellman is an adjunct professor of Theology at Fordham University and on the faculty of the Bard Prison Initiative.*

---

### **Halakha's Attitude Toward Transgender and Transsexual Inclusion with Ysoscher Katz**

This session will explore how classical Jewish law, Halakha, approaches questions of transgender and transsexual status and identity.

*BIO: Rabbi Ysoscher Katz is the Chair of the Talmud department at Yeshivat Chovevei Torah and the Senior part-time Rabbi of the Prospect Heights Shul. He studied at the Satmar, Brisk, and Beit Yosef Navaradok yeshivot. R. Katz has taught Talmud and halakhah at a wide array of institutions. For nine years, he delivered a daily daf yomi shiur- twice a day in Borough Park. During the past years, he has taught weekly Jewish thought and Talmud classes for professionals on the Upper East Side and Park Slope, and at the Skirball Center for adult education. A graduate of HaSha'ar's educators program, he also worked as the Judaic studies coordinator for the innovative Luria school, and taught at Ma'ayanot, SAR, and Ramaz High Schools. In addition, he has directed the Lindenbaum Center for Modern Orthodox Halakhah, composed responsa on vital contemporary halakhic issues, and writes extensively on matters pertaining to Jewish society for publications including the Forward, Jerusalem Post, Makor Rishon, and the Times of Israel.*

---

### **Love Like A Tree with Sara Luria**

Many of us are taught to "love your neighbor as yourself" and that "you shall love God with all of your mind, body, and spirit." Yet, we often don't talk about love in a Jewish setting or context. What do we mean by love of God, of our neighbor, of ourselves? In a time when the ethic of love is deeply needed, join us for conversation and reflection on the redemptive power of love - beyond romantic! - in our culture, in our country, in Jewish tradition, and in our lives.

*BIO: Rabbi Sara Luria co-founded Beloved Brooklyn, a home-based experiment in Jewish life. Prior to Beloved, Sara's experiences as a community organizer, birth doula, and hospital chaplain inspired her to found ImmerseNYC, a pluralistic, feminist, grassroots-energized community mikveh project, now housed at the Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan.*

---

### **The Torah of Pleasure, Joy, and the Erotic with Rachel Timoner**

We will look at traditional text sources on pleasure and joy in conversation with Audre Lorde's essay, "Uses of the Erotic: the Erotic as Power," considering how and whether the erotic, joy, and pleasure are means and/or ends in a fulfilled Jewish life and in bringing the world to come.

*BIO: Rabbi Rachel Timoner is senior rabbi of Congregation Beth Elohim. From 2009 to 2015, Rabbi Timoner served as Associate Rabbi of Leo Baeck Temple in Los Angeles, where she was a beloved teacher of Torah and helped to develop a thriving Shabbat Morning Minyan, Community of Elders, Spirituality Workshop, and Community Organizing Leadership Team that took on public transportation, affordable housing, and immigrant rights. Rachel received a B.A. from Yale University, and received her rabbinical degree from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in 2009, where she was a Wexner Graduate Fellow and was honored with the Lorraine Helman Rubin Memorial Prize for Scholarly Writing, the Women of Reform Judaism Centennial Prize, the Professor Stanley Gevirtz Award for Excellence in Bible, and the Louis and*

Minnie Raphael Memorial Prize for Outstanding Service to a Small Congregation. Learn more about Rachel at <http://racheltimoner.net/>.

### **First Impressions: What the beginning of our sacred texts teaches us with Josh Weinberg**

On Shavuot we mark the giving of Torah and study its evolution. This session will be a crash course throughout the Jewish bookshelf examining the first paragraph of each of the major canonical works of our tradition from ancient to modern.

*BIO: Rabbi Josh Weinberg serves as the Vice President of the URJ for Israel and Reform Zionism and is the Executive Director of ARZA, the Association of Reform Zionists of America. He was ordained from the HUC-JIR Israeli Rabbinic Program in Jerusalem, and is currently living in New York. Originally from Chicago, he has a B.A. from University of Wisconsin in Hebrew Literature, Political Science and International Relations, and an M.A. at the Hebrew University in Jewish Education. Josh has taught and lectured widely throughout Israel, the U.S. and Europe, as well as on Kivunim and Shnat Netzer gap-year programs. He has led numerous tours and trained tour educators for the Reform movement's Israel experiences.*

---

### **Amos and Moral Torah with David Kline**

Prior to our great literary prophets, our religion seems to have been a deal between Israel and its God; loyalty and burnt offerings in return for divine protection. Amos said God wants justice!

*BIO: Rabbi David L Kline, member of CBE, participant in Chevreh Torah and adult education. He taught Bible for 15 years at University of Louisiana, Monroe. His Bible story translations with context introductions are available on his blog. (<http://good-to-be-a-jew.blogspot.com/>)*

---

### **The Torah Before the Torah with Jon Leener**

We have a tradition of the Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob adhering to all the commandments in the Torah. How can that be if the Torah was only given at Mount Sinai. In this class we will explore the notion of the Torah existing before the world is even created.

*BIO: Rabbi Jon Leener is a co-founder of Base Hillel and is the rabbi of Base Brooklyn in Crown Heights.*

---

### **Torah for the People: Autonomy & Authority in the Internet Age with Daniel Septimus**

The internet has radically changed the way information is disseminated and controlled. It has democratized access to knowledge and shifted the nature and loci of authority. This has major implications for the way Judaism is taught, transmitted, and created today. In this session, we'll survey the contemporary landscape and explore Talmudic texts that grapple with the opportunities and challenges of democratizing access to Torah.

*Daniel Septimus is the CEO of Sefaria, an organization launched in 2013 to create digital infrastructure for the future of Jewish learning and conversation. Daniel serves on the Board of Directors of Encounter, 70 Faces Media, and the Luria Academy of Brooklyn. He lives in Brooklyn with his wife and four children.*

## [Baghdad 1941 with Naomi Rabeeya and Hillel Gruenberg](#)

The Farhud, a riot against the Jews of Baghdad, Iraq, took place in 1941 during the holiday of Shavuot. The event and its frequent omission from the larger narrative of Jewish history has implications for today in terms of identity, memory and history. To face the sometimes hard and complex interplay of politics, religion and culture, we must study and understand this tragic event.

*Naomi Rabeeya is the daughter of a Farhud survivor whose family was forced to leave Baghdad for Israel in 1951. She works in development for Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion. She is active in local politics in New York Senate District 17. Dr. Hillel Gruenberg serves as Director of Israel Engagement at the New York Campus of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR) and The Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS). Hillel received his Ph.D. in Jewish Studies and History from New York University under the auspices of the Taub Center for Israel Studies in 2015, during which time he was the recipient of a Schusterman Israel Scholars Award.*

---

## [The Queerness of Portnoy's Complaint with Warren Hoffman](#)

2019 is the 50th anniversary of Philip Roth's raunchy sexual comic masterpiece Portnoy's Complaint. While the book was deemed misogynist and filthy by a number of critics and readers, the text is more than just a "dirty" monologue of Alexander Portnoy's sexual exploits. In this session we'll place the book in its 1969 context and discuss how the book is an exploration of Jewish ethnic, gender, and sexual identities of its time period. (Please note, this session will feature sexually explicit content and language.)

*Warren Hoffman is the Executive Director of the Association for Jewish Studies, the largest academic Jewish Studies organization in the world. He received his PhD in American Literature from UC-Santa Cruz and is the author of The Passing Game: Queering Jewish American Culture and The Great White Way: Race and the Broadway Musical (2nd edition forthcoming winter 2020). Learn more about him at [warrenhoffman.com](http://warrenhoffman.com)*

---

## [How To Mourn AND Organize: Jewish Best Practices for Community Response to Collective Trauma with Regina Sandler-Phillips](#)

"Don't mourn, organize!" abbreviates a final message of immigrant labor activist and songwriter Joe Hill before his execution in 1915. More recently, Jewish symbols of personal mourning have been appropriated for purposes of public organizing. Yet when an entire community, city or nation seems like a vast collective house of mourning, some public actions may inadvertently increase the trauma—and disempower the grief of those most directly impacted. Come and learn how Jewish principles of timing, verbal restraint, and empathy can help us to center the experiences of those most immediately affected, listen deeply, and hear the wisdom channeled through the voices of survivors. Instead of remaining trapped in either/or, we can truly mourn AND truly organize—with each imperative strengthening the effectiveness of the other.

*BIO: Rabbi Regina Sandler-Phillips, MSW, MPH, is the executive director of WAYS OF PEACE Community Resources, which renews justice and kindness across lines of diversity and throughout the life cycle. She lived and worked for social change in Israel during the turbulent years of 1989-1994, was honored for her leadership in the post-9/11/01 NYC disaster relief, and participated in the 2005 interfaith Bearing Witness Retreat at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Her work has guided caring community development from New England to the Texas / Mexico border to New Zealand, and has strengthened the coexistence of Jews, Muslims, and Christians in Egypt. Rabbi Regina is the author of "Counting Days: From Liberation to Revelation" and the editor of "Generous Justice: Jewish Wisdom for Just-Giving." Learn more at [www.waysofpeace.org/mission](http://www.waysofpeace.org/mission)*

## [Making an Offer We Can't Refuse: Accepting the Torah with Aileen Heiman](#)

Jewish tradition teaches that the Israelites agreed to receive the Torah from God before they even knew what it was. What does it mean to receive Torah and what role does choice play at the personal and communal level? We will examine both the written and implied offer of Torah, as well as what we can learn about covenantal relationships and the acceptance of being commanded. Come explore how the way we are offered something changes the way we choose to receive it, through a combination of text study, interactive exercises, and discussion. Participants should be prepared to actively engage with the text and each other. Texts will be provided in English and Hebrew – all levels of learning welcome.

*BIO: Aileen is the Director of Youth Education and Family Programming at Park Slope Jewish Center. She has a Masters in Jewish Education from Hebrew College and a Masters in Jewish Studies from the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. Aileen loves engaging with text and tradition through a creative lens and opening new access points to Torah.*

## **BLOCK TWO: 11:35 PM**

### [Israeli Dancing with Rina Rinkewich](#)

Come join the circle and experience the joy of Israeli Dancing to great Israeli music in community! Rina will share her love of Israeli dance and music with you, and provide an understanding of the history of Israeli dance and what it is today, while you learn about the dances we will dance together. She will teach and lead you through accessible circle and line dances ranging from classic oldies to contemporary dances coming out of Israel and the Diaspora. We will do a combination of slow lyrical Israeli dances and upbeat aerobic ones like the Hora. No prior Israeli dance experience necessary. All ages welcome, including children. Bring your dance requests. Get great exercise, raise your energy, lift your spirits, and have fun!!

*BIO: Rina Rinkewich, M.F.A. teaches dance and leads events and workshops in New York City and internationally. After a career in Modern dance performing, teaching, and choreographing for her own dance company, she now focuses on her childhood love of Israeli Dance. Five years ago, Rina started a monthly Israeli dance session at her own shul: the Park Slope Jewish Center. This evolved into a weekly session she has led for the past three years at Union Temple of Brooklyn. Rina teaches a weekly Israeli dance class at the Shorefront Y Senior Center, and teaches/leads Israeli dancing at numerous special events, most recently at Ithaca College for IC Loves Israel Day. rinarinkewich@gmail.com Facebook: Israeli Dancing with Rina Rinkewich*

---

### [Psalm Study Marathon Pt. II with Barat Ellman](#)

The project of reading and studying each psalm in the Tanakh in order began more than three years ago. This session picks up where we left off last year. We will cover as many psalms as the session allows. The psalms will be studied in English with Hebrew texts provided as well. No knowledge of Hebrew nor prior knowledge, however is necessary.

*See Block One for bio.*

## [The Problem of Our Existence: Creation; Separation; Adam; The Woman; Alienation; Mercy with Ayal Robkin](#)

Erich Fromm, in his book *The Art of Loving*, writes, "man is the only animal for whom his own existence is a problem which he has to solve." A close read of the Biblical Creation story and Chassidic texts present an incredibly insightful lens through which we can explore Fromm's reflection on our existence, the source of much of our suffering and sinfulness, and a profoundly humanistic response to this challenge.

*BIO: Rabbi Ayal Robkin holds a B.A. in Jewish Studies from the University of Maryland and a Masters in Religious Education from the University of Pennsylvania. After then serving in the IDF, Ayal completed the Pardes Educators Program as well as Semikha through Rabbis Danny Landes, Zalman Nechemya Goldberg and Shuki Reich. Ayal lives in Brooklyn and teaches Talmud, Tanach, Tikkun Middot (ethical character philosophy), Chasidut and Jewish/Mindfulness Meditation at the Abraham Joshua Heschel High School in Manhattan, NY.*

---

## [To Kohelet, A Butterfly: The Contrasting Existentialism of Kendrick Lamar and King Solomon, with Sam Reinstein](#)

In his 2015 album "To Pimp a Butterfly", Kendrick gets philosophical, and even existential. In this shiur we will discuss how some lyrics compare and contrast to Kohelet (Ecclesiastes). We will discuss questions like: "What is the purpose of material possessions?" "How can we stay to our path, and lead our best lives?" "How can we best help fix the world?" This shiur will be discussion based and is open to everyone. No prior knowledge in Torah or Rap is necessary. Thanks to Scotty Jacobson for inspiring the shiur.

*BIO: Since moving to Crown Heights four years ago, Sam Reinstein has been the Rabbi at Congregation Kol Israel, a small 90 year old Modern Orthodox synagogue. During the week, Sam is an Actuary.*

---

## [Yoga with Rebecca Epstein\\*\\*](#)

In order to receive the Torah, we have to be ready with our whole bodies. This session will offer a moment to check in with our bodies and engage in basic yoga poses, preparing us for the ultimate connection with the Divine, and giving us a chance to loosen up during a night of study.

*BIO: Rabbi Rebecca Epstein is the Associate Rabbi/Educator of CBE. Rabbi Epstein is originally from St. Paul, Minnesota. She studied Cognitive Science and Art History at Vassar College. Upon her ordination from the New York campus of HUC in 2009, she served Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple in New Brunswick, New Jersey. There, she pioneered a teen mentorship program, a women's spirituality group, and an environmental certification process, in addition to directing the religious school. Rebecca and her family moved to Austin in 2012, where she served as a National Vice President for the Women's Rabbinic Network, and then from 2014-2018 as Rabbi and Director of Education at Congregation Beth Israel, leading the religious school through a major transformation in Hebrew education.*

---

## [2nd Beginning & The Women of the Exodus with Michal Kohane](#)

Mothers, daughters, midwives, leaders - Who are the women of the Exodus? What is their role? Any message to us? Text based exploration and discussion, open to all levels, no previous knowledge of Hebrew needed.

*BIO: Born and raised in Israel, Michal Kohane is currently the Rosh Kehila of the Prospect Heights Shul in Brooklyn, a regular scholar in residence in Oakland CA, and a student at Yeshivat Maharat. She has been a leader and educator in the Jewish Community of Northern California for over twenty five years, serving as acting rabbi, a day-school educator, federation executive director and more. Michal is passionate about Jewish text learning and building community. She holds a BA in Studies of Israel and Education, an M.S. in Jewish Studies, an MA in Clinical Psychology, and is pursuing a PsyD in organizational psychology. She is an avid writer: her first novel, Hachug ("Extracurricular") was published in Israel by Steimatzky in 2016, and her weekly blog can be found at [www.miko284.com](http://www.miko284.com).*

---

### **[The Yemeni Children Affair: Mizrahi Experiences in Israel/Palestine, 1948-1967 with Ethan Cohen and Asaf Calderon\\*\\*](#)**

Ethan and Asaf, both Mizrahi Jews, welcome you to engage with first-person narratives of African and Asian Jewish immigrants to Israel/Palestine in the early days of the Jewish state. Specifically, we will focus on the tragedy of child abduction that afflicted many Mizrahi families. Often, Israeli doctors and government officials told these Arab Jewish immigrants that their babies had died, when in reality the babies had been secretly brought to European Jewish parents.

*BIO: Ethan Cohen is a Jewish educator and Communications Coordinator for the synagogue Kolot Chayeinu. He edits Albinism InSight, a national, quarterly magazine for people with albinism. He performs jazz guitar and standup comedy, and plans to pursue a Masters in history at Columbia University this fall.*

---

### **[Ruth and Naomi: Creating a Family with Carie Carter](#)**

Tonight we will look at the famous story of Ruth and Naomi through the lens of adoption, considering both the potential and the challenges they faced in creating a new family.

*BIO: Rabbi Carie Carter has served as the rabbi at the Park Slope Jewish Center for the past 20 years. Prior to that, following her ordination from the Jewish Theological Seminary, she worked as Director of Cleveland Hillel. Inspired by her work in Hillel and as an educator in pluralistic summer camps and youth movements, Carie is deeply committed to helping people engage with Judaism in their own way, recognizing that "there are many roads to the palace" of Jewish living. She is dedicated to creating inclusive communities filled with exploration and creativity, in which the dignity of every human being is honored and the lives of ALL who enter are truly celebrated.*

---

### **[Ben Zoma's deliberate misinterpretations" in Avot 4:1 with Aryeh Ethan Falk](#)**

Ben Zoma famously teaches: "Who is wise? One he learns from every person." Ben Zoma purports to derive this aphorism, and a series of others, from verses in scripture. In this shiur we will investigate conflicts between Ben Zoma's teaching and his proof texts and ask whether he is in fact subverting his sources. Along the way, we will explore themes of insiders vs. outsiders, revealed Torah versus hidden Torah and hierarchy vs. egalitarianism.

*Aryeh Falk lives in Prospect Heights and practices law at Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP. He is a graduate of Harvard Law School and has studied Torah at yeshivot in Israel in the U.S. After two years as an enthusiastic participant, Aryeh is excited to be teaching at this year's Shavuot across Brooklyn for the first time.*

## [Forget!: The Radical Influence of Nietzsche on Modern Jewish Thought with Joe Schwartz](#)

How has Nietzsche's influenced the Jewish present? More than you'd guess! Come join Rabbis Joe Schwartz of IDRA and Josh Weinberg of ARZA for a fascinating exploration of this radical thinker's surprising legacy

*BIO: Rabbi Joe Schwartz is the founder of IDRA, which will be a house of culture, learning and coffee in Brooklyn. IDRA aims to restore the café and its ethos to the heart of Jewish community.*

---

## [Reading Between Revelation and Law with Michele Chinitz](#)

Shavuot signifies the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai – yet the moment of textual transmission is not unambiguous or instantaneous according to the traditions of the holiday. If studying all night symbolizes readiness to receive the laws of the Torah, then this night of study is poised figuratively between the giving of the Torah as revelation and receiving it as law. To understand this in-between relationship to text, we will study passages of modern literature that invite us to analyze the expectations of receiving “the letter” in modern times. As *Matan Torah* takes place in the story of exodus from slavery, we will discuss, using short excerpts, one theoretical text on the strange temporality of historical crisis and two literary texts that imagine the delivery of a letter and challenge us to question the way we use text, here, literature, to respond to history.

*BIO: Michele Chinitz is a PhD student in English at the City University of New York, where she specializes in twentieth-century literature. She has taught literature courses on topics such as the history of the English novel, music and history in modern literature, national and cultural identities, and the figure of the Jew.*

---

## [Bein Kodesh LeChol: Building a Mindful Connection to the Ritual of Havdalah with Phyllis Sussman and Laura Marder\\*\\*](#)

Rituals can be powerful and personal. Individuals find meaning and connection to ritual and religious practice in a variety of ways. As educators we present diverse approaches to learning in an effort to reach the many different personalities and learning styles in our classrooms. In this session we will present an assortment of approaches and tools to deepen one's personal connection to the ritual of Havdalah.

*BIO: Phyllis Sussman is the Judaic Studies Coordinator at the Hannah Senesh Community Day School. She has spent the past 18 years working as a Jewish educator. Phyllis feels very fortunate to work with Laura Marder, Senesh's 5th and 6th grade Judaics teacher. Laura is a lead educator for Brooklyn Beit Midrash and a skilled practitioner of Jewish meditation. At Senesh we embrace the rich mosaic of identities reflected in contemporary Jewish life and support our families on their Jewish journeys. Both Phyllis and Laura enjoy finding new and creative ways to help others find connection to Jewish life and practice.*

---

## [Take a Look at Habbakuk with Larry Magarik](#)

The Haftarah for the 2nd Day of Shavuot is drawn from the Book of Habakkuk, an obscure Prophet. Who was Habakkuk? What does the Haftarah mean? Why is associated with Shavuot? When was this holiday transformed from a first fruits festival to the time of revelation? We will look at traditional commentators and modern scholarship and discuss the meaning of the Shavuot holiday. All texts in English as well as Hebrew, no prior background needed.

*BIO: Larry Magarik is the author of a number of articles in Jewish Bible Review and Kerem, has taught at Prozdor and the National Havurah Institute, and is a cantor as well as a lawyer.*

## **BLOCK THREE: 12:40 AM**

### **Ba'yamim Ha'heim Bizman Ha'zeh (Then and Now): the Halakhic Status of Shotah (Mentally Disabled) pre- and post-Freud with Ysoscher Katz**

In classical Halacha, someone who is mentally disabled (known as a *shoteh*, derived from the Hebrew word for wanderer) is exempt from many religious obligations and functions. This shiur will explore the halachic status for such individuals, with an eye toward contemporary Jewish life.

*See Block One for bio.*

---

### **Diaspora: Authentic Judaism with Rabbi Barat Ellman**

Rabbinic Judaism's origins lie in diasporic reality. Loss of Temple and expulsion from Jerusalem necessitated the reimagined, yet robust, concept of covenant, based on substitution of text and study for the biblical promises of land and worship which characterized Judaism for nearly 2000 years. The founding of the State of Israel challenges the validity of diasporic Judaism, for better or worse. This class, however, will counter that argument by consideration of diaspora as a positive enactment, even as a means to fulfillment of Jewish life.

*See Block One for bio.*

---

### **Pirkei Avot: The Rabbis and Revelation with Jason Gitlin**

Moses received [the] Torah from Sinai... so begins the first mishna of Pirkei Avot, a rabbinic collection of ethical teachings traditionally studied from Passover to Shavuot. We'll look at what this first mishna and other teachings from the work can tell us about rabbinic perspectives on the nature and role of revelation in Jewish life.

*BIO: Rabbi Jason Gitlin is Kane Street Synagogue's Engagement Director and is currently leading a half-year community-wide Pirkei Avot study, <https://kanestreet.org/pirkei-avot>.*

---

### **Does Service Matter? with Riki Robinson, Jaz Twersky, and Josh Flink**

Is service a Jewish value? Do you think giving back to your community and neighborhood is a manifestation of being Jewish? In this session we'll unpack the nuances of community service, civic engagement, volunteering -- and whatever else you call it! -- through activities and dialogue. It will be led by Repair the World fellows who lead regular service opportunities in Brooklyn.

*BIO: Riki Robinson is a Los Angeles transplant living in Crown Heights. She's passionate about radical imagination, zines, tiny houses, and urban farms! Jaz Twersky is a queer Jew in Brooklyn currently working on issues of injustice in the education and incarceration systems. They love knitting, podcasts, and brainstorming better futures. Josh Flink is from the*

Chicago-area and likes basketball, Game of Thrones, and traveling. You can find him trying out tasty Kosher places in Crown Heights.

---

### [Queer Undefined: Creating a Crowdsourced LGBTQ+ Dictionary with Sara Goldstein-Weiss](#)

Urban Dictionary, but make it queer – that’s the header of the first online post I made requesting definitions for Queer Undefined, before the project even had a name. QueerUndefined.com is a site that provides informal, personal definitions for LGBTQ+ terms. The site is intended to be a collaborative platform where LGBTQ+ folks can come together to construct and share our vocabulary. Building Queer Undefined taught me that many technological “best practices” aren’t actually best when it comes to building a tool for social change. At the same time, Queer Undefined shows the remarkable shift that tech brings to marginalized communities’ fight for a better world.

*BIO: Sara Goldstein-Weiss is the creator of Queer Undefined, a queer online dictionary. She moved from Boston to the city this past September. She’s a software programmer aspiring to one day quit tech and work in the nonprofit sector. In her spare time, she likes to draw, dance, volunteer for the Dyke March, and play recreational roller derby.*

---

### ["We Don't Trade Lives, Vision": A Halakhic view of Avengers Infinity War with Sam Reinstein](#)

A major theme of Avengers Infinity War was the concept of sacrificing lives for the greater good. Unfortunately, this question has been a common one throughout Jewish history. In this class, we will discuss the ethical and Halakhic issues surrounding the question and try and decide if the decisions they make in the movie are the correct ones from a Jewish lens. This shiur is open to everyone. While there will be spoilers for Infinity War (not necessarily for Endgame), it will be understandable to those who have not seen the movie.

*See Block Two for bio.*

---

### ["A love without reproof is not love:" The Challenging \(Jewish\) Art of Giving and Receiving Feedback with Marisa Harford](#)

An effective bit of feedback, delivered well, can make the difference for someone between success and failure, hope and despair—but giving feedback effectively is very difficult! This session will explore the concept of tochecha (reproof or rebuke) in Jewish thought through the contemporary framing of feedback. What is feedback, and are tochecha and feedback the same? When is it appropriate to give feedback? When might it be obligatory to give feedback? We will ground our discussions in Jewish texts, but also touch on principles and practices from the contemporary education and business literature.

*BIO: As the director of Teacher Residency programs at an education nonprofit, Marisa Harford has studied, facilitated, and taught professional coaching, adult learning, and change management for over 10 years. She also loves learning and teaching Torah and has taught for many years at the National Havurah Committee Summer Institute and Chesapeake retreat, on topics as varied as women in the book of Shoftim and the concept of Tzniut (modesty).*

## [Reconstructing Zionism with Barak Sella and Deborah Secular\\*\\*](#)

The Z word. A belief in Jewish self-determination and peoplehood can feel like anything from a dream to a lost cause or even source of oppression. Together we will look back at our roots, ask what it takes to update Zionism to our current context, and why this task might be of value. Constant revolution is a key piece of the Zionist idea. Jews never stopped reconstructing Zionism, why should we?

*BIO: Deborah Secular is the National Educational Director for the Habonim Dror North America labor Zionist youth movement. Barak Sella is a member of the Dror Israel educators movement and is currently serving as the Central Shaliach (Israeli Emissary) for Habonim Dror North America.*

## **BLOCK FOUR: 1:45 AM**

### [The Jews are Coming! With Josh Weinberg\\*\\*](#)

This popular and controversial Israeli satirical TV show explores chapters of modern and ancient Jewish history in a nuanced and critical way.

*See Block One for bio.*

---

### [Shoteh - Exemption or Exclusion: Disability, Identity, & the Pursuit of Acceptance in Jewish Texts with Sheryl Jaffe](#)

"Labels are for [soup] cans, not people," proclaimed Anthony Rapp, however, in the Talmud, codifying and categorizing provides a structure for folks to determine individual and communal expectations. In the texts, people who are exempt from halachic obligations on the basis of their neurological condition and/or mental health distress are labeled 'shoteh.' During this session, we will struggle with the ways the texts' exemptions impact our understanding of disability status, identity, and Jewish communal acceptance. (Text translation will be provided. Please contact me about the specific ways this session can be more accessible to you!)

*BIO: Sheryl Jaffe currently serves as the Assistant Director of Mental Health at a publicly funded health clinic, where she provides patient care and clinical supervision. An alumna of Pardes Institute, Sheryl continues to learn at the Drisha Evening Beit Midrash for Mental Health Professionals & Clergy. Sheryl studied psychology, public health, and Judaic studies as an undergrad, and she earned graduate degrees in both art therapy and clinical social work.*

---

### [Learning from Ants and Sages Alike: Biomimicry and Social Change with Rena Branson](#)

"Ant societies function through individual ants acting collectively in accord with simple, local information to carry on all of their survival activities. Every ant relies on the work of others in producing their own work. Cooperative work. Collective sustainability." - adrienne maree brown, Emergent Strategy. Biomimicry is the adaptation of systems and patterns found in nature to help us address complex human problems. Jewish texts are full of reverence for the ingenious order of creation, and also prescribe many ways for humans to create helpful social structures and maintain peace. Come learn what animals and ancient Rabbis alike might teach us about building harmonious human societies! There will also be optional nigun singing to help us tune into our pre-verbal animal selves, which

might be happening to us anyway at such an hour. This session is sponsored by Avodah: Sparking Jewish Leaders, Igniting Social Change.

*BIO: Rena Branson is an educator and aspiring rabbi from New York. She studied at Oberlin (2014), Pardes, and Hadar, and served as an Avodah corps member at Footsteps. She has returned to Avodah this past year as an Alumni Justice Ambassador. Rena also started A Queer Nigun Project, which hosts healing spaces for LGBTQ-identified people to explore and record nigunim, as well as lead nigun circles in prisons. Rena is excited to participate in the Rising Song Residency this fall with a cohort of glorious Jewish musicians in Philadelphia!*

---

### **Spring up! The Mystery Songs of Sefer Bamidbar with Josh Breitzer**

The Israelites' winding story through the wilderness is studded with surprisingly tuneful twists and turns of ancient and unknown origin. Join Cantor Breitzer in attempting to put these musical pieces back together!

*BIO: Cantor Joshua Breitzer feels blessed to have served CBE since 2011. He leads the community through prayer and song, teaches chanting and ritual skills to students of all ages, and helps create sacred experiences for every occasion. Cantor Breitzer performs regularly at synagogues and concert halls across America and Israel. A mid-Michigan native, Cantor Breitzer holds voice degrees from the University of Michigan and the New England Conservatory. He received his ordination at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in 2011 and joined the adjunct faculty soon thereafter. In 2016, he was elected a Vice President of the American Conference of Cantors, which offers spiritual leadership and sacred music to Reform congregations throughout the world.*

---

### **Floods as Mirrors: A Comparative Analysis of Ancient Flood Stories with Hannah Grossman**

How do our origin stories affect how we perceive our place in the world? Through comparing primeval flood stories from around the world we arrive at expanded and deepened understandings of how various cultures viewed their presence in the universe. In this class we will analyze some of these stories and zoom in on a comparison of an Akkadian/Babylonian flood epic and Bereshit's flood story. Using excerpts from the texts and an article by Tikva Frymer-Kensky, we may come away with new insight into how ancient Hebrew ideas stood out millenia ago and continue to reflect Jewish identity today.

*BIO: Hannah Grossman has an MA in Bible and an MA in Experiential Jewish Education from The Jewish Theological Seminary. She spent a year studying at the Pardes Center for Jewish Educators in Jerusalem and a year working as a Jewish educator in the Bene Israel community of Mumbai, India through the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC). Hannah has worked as the Education Director of Young Judeaea Camp Tel Yehudah, in AVODAH's community and alumni relations department and in various teaching capacities in the New York area. Currently, Hannah loves working here at CBE as the Assistant Director of Yachad.*

## [Sholom Aleichem: A Life Well Lived with Jan Huttner](#)

“Sholem Aleichem” was an author, but Solomon Rabinowitz—the man behind the pen name—was a son, a husband, a father, and a mensch. In this session, you will learn why the details of his family life continue to inspire us.

*Jan Lisa Huttner (aka Mrs. Rich Miller) is the founder of WITASWAN (Women in the Audience Supporting Women Artists Now) and the co-founder of International SWAN Day. Huttner has self-published two books focused on the women behind the story of Fiddler on the Roof. Richard Bayard Miller (aka Mr. Jan Lisa Huttner) is the CFO of SUNY Downstate Medical Center. Miller received his Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Chicago. Jan and Rich are members of Park Slope Jewish Center and the Institute for Living Judaism Brooklyn.*

---

## [A Donkey's Horn & A Field of Knives with Michal Kohane](#)

How do you reap a field of knives?? with a donkey's horn!! This is just one of the exchanges in the fantastic debate between Savei D'vei Atuna and Rabbi Yehoshua. What are they saying and what are they really talking about?? Join us for an exciting piece of Tractate B'khorot. Open to all; no previous background in Gemara needed (and you might still enjoy this session either way!)

*See Block Two for Bio.*

---

## [The Fiftieth Day: Now What? A Roundup of Omer Counters with Regina Sandler-Phillips](#)

Were you an Omer counter this year? Were you guided by an Omer counter? The Biblical imperative to count 49 days between Passover and Shavu'ot has been imbued with mystical and ethical significance over the centuries, as a spiritual transition from liberation to revelation. More recently, this practice has given rise to a range of Omer counting guides that range from meditative Kabbalistic exercises to comic images of "Counting the Homer." Come and share your experiences of counting the Omer—with or without Mussar, Kabbalah, or the Simpsons—in this roundup session where we will search ourselves for “a heart of wisdom” and ask: Now what? We'll also sing a bit, and consider selections from diverse Omer guides.

*See Block One For Bio*

## **BLOCK FIVE: 2:50 AM**

### [Who Commands the Commandments? with Matt Green](#)

Upon receiving the Torah at Sinai, the Israelites entered into a covenant of commandments. But the commandments themselves do not merely reflect the relationship between one single commander (God) and a nation of commanded individuals (Israel). This shiur will explore how the notion of who commands whom is expanded in the Talmud and beyond.

*BIO: Matt Green has been at CBE since the fall of 2015 when he started as their Rabbinic Intern, and now serves as their Assistant Rabbi. He serves as the director of Brooklyn Jews, CBE's community of young Brooklynites looking for connection to Jewish culture, time, and ritual. A born and raised Michigander, Matt holds a B.A. in History from the University of Michigan. He was ordained by the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in New York, where he was a Tisch Fellow.*

## **What's Bothering Rashi (when he reads The Lord of the Rings): Understanding mefarshim through a Tolkien lens, with Amelia Wolf**

Do you have trouble telling the comments of Rashi, Rashbam, and Ibn Ezra apart? Would you like to learn more about their philosophies - but just wish that it could involve a little more Lord of the Rings? Then this session is for you! Learn about famous commentators through how they definitely would have commented on the works of Tolkien.

*BIO: Amelia Wolf is a rabbinical student at the Jewish Theological Seminary and a founder and organizer of Minyan Atara, the Crown Heights Egalitarian Minyan. This is her third Tolkien Torah (patent pending) shiur for Shavuot Across Brooklyn, and looks forward to teaching many more.*

---

## **Exploring Grief Narratives through the Book of Ruth with Rachel Bergstein**

Grief is often isolating and misunderstood, especially among young people and in young communities. Finding opportunities to connect with others on a grief journey can be transformative, offering a way to normalize personal experiences and to explore with nuance and complexity the ways grief reshapes our lives. Making space for grief and loss in our communities is also important, and includes learning how to hold others' grief not only during acute periods of loss and mourning but also over the long-term and in our daily lives. In this session we'll examine the Book of Ruth as one family's grief narrative and use the text as a guiding framework to explore and share our own grief narratives. This session is open to everyone, regardless of personal experience with grief and loss. We will center those on a personal grief journey as well as allow those in support roles to practice holding space for their peers through compassionate listening.

*BIO: Rachel Bergstein enjoys liberatory politics, homemade ferments, and community singing.*

---

## **From Sinai to Psychedelics: Can we Embody Revelation in our World Today? With Rishe Groner**

What really happened at Sinai? Was it a visceral experience, a deep sleep, or the world's biggest group acid trip? We'll talk about the use of entheogens and hallucinogenic substances to encounter the Divine, and uncover what psychedelics research can teach us about how we continue to live out Sinai in our daily lives, interacting with God as an ever-growing experience.

*Born in Melbourne, Australia, Rishe Groner is the founder of The Gene-Sis, a movement embodying the Jewish mystical experience. As Jewish spiritual educator for almost two decades; Rishe now presents at retreats, conferences and arts-and-music festivals, from Limmud to Burning Man, focusing on ancient and innovative spiritual practices that incorporate body and soul, especially Chassidic traditions of niggun, dance and immersive ritual. Rishe also produces embodied Shabbat experiences in Brooklyn, and shares teachings that empower feminist spirituality on Jewish websites as well as [www.thegene-sis.com](http://www.thegene-sis.com). She currently studying for Rabbinic ordination at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York.*

---

## **Our Two Way Relationship with Hashem with Shlomo Fingerer-Singer**

Does God really need us? Does He really care for our sacrifices? What does the Torah mean when it describes Hashem getting angry at us? Yes. According to the Talmud, God really cares about having a real two way relationship with us. Well, if it is to be a relationship, and not just commandments, how do we find meaning in

traditions that date back to a world of 2000 years ago? We will focus on finding meaning in seemingly outdated prayer language.

*BIO: I grew up Charedi. I had a secular curriculum at my yeshiva until the sixth grade. From then on, it was strictly religious studies. I am now in Columbia University, pursuing an undergraduate degree in Psychology with a minor in Economics.*

## **BLOCK SIX: 3:55 AM**

### **Sunday Morning Coming Up Nigun Session with Russ Agdern**

We've come so far in the journey of the last seven weeks, let's sing together before it's time to receive the Torah.

*BIO: Russ Agdern is one of the founders of Shir HaMaalot, its current davening coordinator, and likes to make music with you.*

---

### **"Midnight Mindfulness" with Hannah Grossman**

As dawn approaches, come reflect on the night and prepare for the receiving of Torah! Through a Jewish mindfulness workshop involving movement, eating, chanting, hitbodedut (unstructured-personal-private prayer) & Jewish text, let's prepare for the moment we've been waiting for!

*See Block Four for bio.*

---

### **Unsung Heroines: Examining Three Historic Female Cantors with Lianna Mendelson\*\***

What does it take to change the voice of Judaism? How did women become sacred singers? Are we following tradition, or breaking it? This session will focus on the journey of women in the cantorate, through the eyes of three trail-blazing women: Julie Rosewald (1847-1906), Bas Sheva (1923-1960), and Barbara Ostfeld (1952-). We'll examine primary sources, including video.

*Bio: Lianna Mendelson is entering her fourth year as a cantorial student at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. She is a member of the inaugural cohort of the Weitzman-JDC Fellowship in Global Jewish Leadership. Lianna serves as the Student Cantor at Temple Shalom in Chevy Chase, MD, and as a b'nai mitzvah tutor here at CBE. She loves Jewish travel, Israeli music, and knitting.*