

LIVING JUDAISM

A PROGRAM OF JEWISH LEARNING AND LIVING
TUESDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 2010 – MAY 2011
CONGREGATION BETH SHALOM, SEATTLE

Letter to the Front (excerpt)

To be a Jew in the twentieth century
Is to be offered a gift. If you refuse,
Wishing to be invisible, you choose
Death of the spirit, the stone insanity.
Accepting, take full life. Full agonies:
Your evening deep in labyrinthine blood
Of those who resist, fail, and resist: and God
Reduced to a hostage among hostages.

The gift is torment. Not alone the still
Torture, isolation; or torture of the flesh.
That may come also. But the accepting wish,
The whole and fertile spirit as guarantee
For every human freedom, suffering to be free,
Daring to live for the impossible.

Muriel Rukeyser

Rabbi Bunam once asked: "Why do they call a zaddik 'a good Jew'?" Jestingly he answered his own question: "If they meant by that that he prays well, they would have to call him 'a good prayer'; if they meant that he learns well, they would have to say 'a good learner.' Now 'a good Jew' thinks well, and drinks well, and everything about him is good."

But to a disciple who had been in Pzhysha only a short time, he said: "You must know why you have come to me. If you think to become 'a good Jew,' you have come in vain. But if you are here in order to become simply a good Jew, you did right."

Martin Buber, *Tales of the Hasidim II*: 265

Program Description

The Living Judaism Course

Tuesday Evenings, 7:00 to 9:30 p.m. (23 classes + additional get-togethers)

Hebrew 7:00 to 8:00 & Living Judaism 8:15-9:30 p.m.

October 12, 2010-April 12, 2011

SPECIAL INTRODUCTORY CLASS, TUESDAY, SEPT 28, 7:00PM

This course serves as both an introduction to Judaism for Jews looking to deepen their knowledge and non-Jewish partners of Jews, and as the required course for conversion students. It lays the foundation for participants to build a strong personal Jewish identity. The main teacher is Mary Potter with some classes also taught by Beth Huppin and Rabbi Borodin. We will study the essential spiritual, religious, ethical, legal, historical, and cultural elements that inspire a commitment to Jewish life and involvement. Participants will be encouraged to explore various forms of Jewish identity through practice.

Participants will take one of our three Hebrew courses, from Aleph Bet to advanced, during the first hour of the course as part of this year of study.

Pre-requisites: Interview with Rabbi Borodin and completion of this Living Judaism application.

Instructors: Mary Potter is the main instructor with assistance from Beth Huppin and Rabbi Jill Borodin.

Mentoring

One of the key elements of the program is to provide a supportive environment for participants to learn how to do Jewish rituals and practices. Several Shabbat dinners and festival celebrations hosted by congregational mentors will take place during the year as well as opportunities to participate in Jewish life cycle and communal events. Participants are encouraged to attend the Bierman Scholar-in-Residence program.

Siyum: Closing Ceremony

At the end of the year a Siyum takes place on Tuesday evening, the last night of class. We have a festive meal and celebrate a year of learning and fellowship. The Siyum is scheduled for May 10, 2011.

Program Faculty

Rabbi Jill Borodin is a native of Toronto, Canada. Rabbi Borodin graduated with a joint honors degree in Jewish and Middle East Studies from McGill University. In 2001 she was ordained as a Conservative rabbi at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and received her Masters of Arts in Jewish Education. Rabbi Borodin has lived in Canada, Israel, France and the United States and volunteered with the Jewish community in Romania under the auspices of the Joint Distribution Committee. Prior to coming to Seattle, Rabbi Borodin was the Rav Sheni at Har Zion Temple in Penn Valley, Pennsylvania. In her spare time, Rabbi Borodin likes to read, rollerblade, bike, and work with clay. Rabbi Borodin lives in the north end of Seattle and has twin daughters.

Mary Potter received her Ph.D. in theology from the University of Chicago Divinity School and for many years taught historical, constructive, and feminist theology at Christian seminaries across the country before she converted to Judaism in 1991. She is the author of "John Calvin's Perspectival Anthropology," the novel "A Woman of Salt," and "Strangers and Sojourners: Stories from the Lowcountry," as well as numerous articles on feminist theology, sexual and domestic violence, and spirituality.

Beth Huppin has a Masters in Teaching Judaica from the University of Judaism. Beth is a teacher at the Seattle Jewish Community School. She has also taught at the Beth Shalom Religious School. A former Melton Senior Educator at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Beth is widely appreciated for her in-depth knowledge and the warm manner of her teaching.

Overview

For whom is CBS's Introduction to Judaism?

1. Adults of Jewish origin seeking to deepen their Jewish knowledge and practice.
2. Adults who may not be of Jewish origin who want to be an active partner in a committed relationship.
3. Adults who may not be of Jewish origin who are considering conversion to Judaism.

How do I sign up for Introduction to Judaism?

The program runs from fall 2010 through spring 2011. The tuition for the program is \$450 for individuals who are members and \$550 for nonmembers. Tuition includes the cost of one of our Hebrew courses as well as the Living Judaism course.

Tuition scholarships and consideration are available for all members who need it.

To apply for the program, please send the enclosed application, and make an appointment with Rabbi Borodin (if you have not done so already), by calling the synagogue at 206 524-0075 or email the rabbi's assistant, Kris Klippel at krisklippel@bethshalomseattle.org. Please send all inquiries to Rabbi Jill Borodin at:

Congregation Beth Shalom
6800 35th Ave. NE
Seattle, WA 98115
206 524-0075
Fax 206 525-5095
krisklippel@bethshalomseattle.org

Living Judaism—Beginning Where You Are A Personal Essay on Jewish Identity and Commitments

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

E-mail: _____

Date: _____

These questions are designed to elicit from you a personal statement that will help the Living Judaism faculty work with you during the coming year and match you with a mentoring family. Please send in a copy of your response with your completed adult education course application. If you and your partner are taking this course together, please submit individual responses.

1. Please describe your religious/cultural background, including your parents' background.
2. Please describe your general education and profession.
3. For those of you who are in a partnership or part of a family, who are the other members?
4. From where you stand right now, with all your experience and inexperience, knowledge and ignorance, how would you define Judaism in one sentence?
5. What are the beliefs and values in Judaism that you find most appealing and persuasive?
6. Please describe your current comfort with and practice of Shabbat, kashrut, Jewish study, and synagogue attendance.
7. Please share any significant encounters with Judaism and Jewish people you have had up to this point. Have you formed friendships or relationships with individuals that have been important to you on your path?
8. Is there a particular Jewish book or thinker that has influenced you or attracted you to Judaism?
9. Any particular Jewish areas of interest or questions you would like to cover?
10. What, for you, is the greatest obstacle to embracing or accepting Judaism?
11. For purposes of matching you with a host family, what are your dietary needs?
12. What would you like from your mentoring family?
13. With which religious organizations do you currently have a connection? What is the nature of this connection?
14. If you are involved with a Jewish partner, please invite them to answer this question: How has your partner's interest in Judaism affected your feelings about Judaism and your commitment to its practices?

B'ruchim haba'im! Welcome to a year of living Judaism. As a community and as individuals we are setting out on a journey of discovery that will involve two of the greatest characteristics of Judaism, joy and wrestling. During this journey we will: explore the depth and richness of the Jewish way of life; open our minds, hearts, bodies, and spirits to the traditions that have been passed down; and honor that tradition with our hard questions and creative responses to it. Please let me know if you must miss a class.

Mary Potter 206-715-4394 engelmp@comcast.net

Beth Huppin 206 526 2964 bennethhuppin@comcast.net

Rabbi Jill Borodin 206-524-0075 rabbiborodin@bethshalomseattle.org

Expectations

- *Texts*
 - Marc-Alain Ouaknin, *Symbols of Judaism* (SJ)
 - Michael Strassfeld, *A Book of Life* (BL)
 - Joseph Telushkin, *Jewish Literacy* (JL) *available for purchase in the CBS office*
 - Michael Strassfeld, *The Jewish Holidays: A Guide and Commentary*

- *Actions*
 - Visit at least two synagogues.
 - Visit at least one other Jewish agency: Jewish Family Services, JCC, a Jewish day school, the Klein-Galland or Summit home, the mikveh. You will be asked to attend a specific event at one of these agencies.
 - Wear a kippah for a week and reflect on your experiences.
 - Select a book from the bibliography, read it, and present a 5-10 minute report on it to the class. If there is a particular book you would like to read and report on that is not on the list, please let me know.
 - Keep a journal about your experience of practicing Judaism. (See the beginner's checklist.)

A Beginner's Checklist of Jewish Practice

Below is a list of basic Jewish practice (mitzvot, commandments, and minhagim, customs) that you will become familiar with over the coming year. These practices form the basis of an observant Jew's life in the home, the synagogue, and the work place. Please remember that this is a minimal list, which does not comprise the whole fabric of Jewish life.

Please keep track of the times when you experience these rituals and occasions in a journal, noting your impressions, insights, and questions.

I. Common Halachic Practices

By the end of the year participants should be familiar with and know how to practice the following:

- Aliyah to the Torah
- Wearing tallit and tefillin
- Shabbat observance
- Shabbat table rituals
- Knowledge of Shabbat prescriptions and prohibitions
- Shabbat-ending Havdalah service
- Chanting the Birkat Hamazon (grace after meals)
- Kashering and basic kashrut practice
- Use of the mikveh

II. Shabbat and the weekdays

We ask participants to attend the Shabbat services at the synagogue. Shabbat is the core of synagogue life. Regular attendance will help to teach you the centrality of Shabbat in Jewish life. Involvement in a morning minyan will also expose you to the prayer traditions of Jews practiced around the world.

III. Festivals and Fast Days Services

The services listed below have been chosen by the rabbi for their importance and distinctiveness. They will involve freeing up these days or services from work obligations. This is one of the first and more important aspects of taking Jewish religious life seriously. An observant Conservative Jew does more than what is listed below, specifically observing (not working and setting aside these days for feasting and celebration) two days of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, the first day of Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret, first and seventh days of Passover and the first day of Shavuot. (We also have congregants who observe the second festival days of Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret, Passover, and Shavuot).

Participants are encouraged to incorporate Sabbath and Festival observance into their lives. Rabbi Borodin, Mary Potter, and Beth Huppin will discuss the outlines of such observance over the course of the year. Please make sure you have a Jewish calendar so you can know when the holidays fall this year.

Service	
1.First Day Rosh Hashanah Morning Services	Sept. 9, 2010
2.Kol Nidre Services/Yom Kippur	Sept. 17, 2010
3.Yom Kippur Morning Services	Sept. 18, 2010
4.Neilah Closing Services for Yom Kippur	Sept. 18, 2010
5.First Day Sukkot Services	Sept. 23, 2010
6.Evening Simchat Torah Services	Sept. 30, 2010
7.Shabbat of Channukah	Dec. 4, 2010
8.Reading of Megilat Esther on Purim	Mar. 19, 2011
9.First Day Passover Services	Apr. 19, 2011
10.Yom Hashoah Services	May 2, 2011
11.Lail Tikun: All Night Shavuot Study Session	June 7, 2011
12.Evening Tisha b'Av Services	Aug. 8, 2011

IV. Home Ritual of the festivals

Below is a list of home rituals connected to the festivals that you should experience during the year. These are events that you will experience with your congregational mentors.

- A ritual meal in the Sukkah
- The ritual lighting of the Chanukah menorah
- Bedikat Hametz ritual on the eve of Passover
- The Passover Seder
- A Yom Tov Festival meal besides Sukkot and the Passover Seder

V. Life Cycle

Below is a list of life-cycle rituals that we hope you will experience during your year of studies:

- A ritual circumcision ceremony for a boy and a covenanting ceremony for a girl, either done in the synagogue or a home
- A Jewish wedding ceremony
- A Jewish funeral and a going to a Shiva House for a Shiva minyan
- A bar/bat Mitzvah ceremony on a Shabbat morning

A Beginners Check List of Jewish Items for the Home

Books:

Chumash (Pentateuch and Prophetic Readings);

Tanach (Jewish Scriptures);

Siddur (Shabbat and Weekday Prayerbook);

Book of Legends (Best anthology of Rabbinic literature) Bialik and Ravnitzky

The History of the Jews, Paul Johnson;

A Guide to Jewish Religious Practice, by Isaac Klein.

Kol Ehad: The United Synagogue Youth Songster for Shabbat

Feast of Freedom Passover Haggadah

The books needed for the Hebrew and Introduction courses are not included here. All books are available through the synagogue.

Ritual Items:

Tzedaka Box

Kiddush Cup

Challah Cover

Shabbat Candlesticks and Candles

Netilat Yadayim (laver for washing)

Havdallah Candle

Besamim (Spice box)

Mezuzah with parchment

Tefillin (not required for women)

Tallit (not required for women)

Kippah (not required for women)

Chanukiah

Pesach Plate

For Prospective Converts:

I am happy to hear of your sincere interest in Judaism and your intention to become Jewish. Below I have listed what I ask of prospective converts. Please read this carefully before coming to see me. I would also ask you to attend Shabbat services at Beth Shalom before coming to see me so you can get a sense of the community that will play a very important role as you explore Jewish life. I also recommend that you read at least one account of a conversion to Judaism.

Jewish Law, as interpreted by Conservative Judaism, requires that a person who wishes to become a Jew must undergo an intensive period of study, which culminates with an appearance before a Beit Din (a court of three rabbis). The Beit Din is assembled to ascertain the sincerity of the convert and his/her commitment to living the Jewish way of life. After receiving the acceptance of the rabbis, the prospective convert immerses in a Mikveh (an immersion) bath. A man who intends to convert must undergo a ritual circumcision or (if already circumcised) undergo a Hatafat Dam Brit (symbolic circumcision) prior to appearing before the Beit Din. After completing these rites and having chosen a Hebrew name, a convert is fully welcomed into the community of Israel.

The decision to convert is an extremely important personal decision in one's life. Therefore, I ask that my students take at least a year of study prior to appearing before the Beit Din. This enables each potential convert to experience the full cycle of the Jewish year as well as to have the time to reflect on the material learned and the cascade of new experiences that form a life lived as a Jew. A decision to convert involves severing, without guilt, any link to one's past religion. It requires the steadfast courage to accept Judaism despite the awareness of the role of anti-Semitism in Western history. While every individual's synthesis of Jewish values and practices will be unique, one who elects Judaism must affirm its basic beliefs, must live its traditional patterns, and must identify with the dreams and destiny of the Jewish people.

Requirements for a Conversion Candidate at Beth Shalom

I. I ask each convert to make the following commitments:

1. Enroll in the Living Judaism Program at Congregation Beth Shalom. This includes an Introduction to Hebrew class.
2. Attendance at Shabbat service on a regular basis (Shabbat morning or afternoon) throughout the year of your studies.
3. Observe aspects of the Jewish festivals by attending services at the synagogue, taking time off from work, and marking the festival in the home.
4. Begin the process of making your home a Jewish home through adoption of Shabbat, kashrut, and daily prayer practices.
5. By the end of your studies learn to do the following Jewish rituals: conducting a Friday night Shabbat seder at home, including candlelighting and kiddush, wrapping Tallit and Tefillin, and chanting of birkat hamazon (grace after meals).

6. Meet with the rabbi every two months for a half an hour check-in to discuss your studies and progress.

II. Mikveh and Circumcision

The Mikveh (ritual bath) is usually done at Ashkenazic Bikur Cholim (ABC) or in Lake Washington. ABC requests an honorarium of \$100 for the use of their mikveh for conversion (it is basically free for all subsequent usage). Lake Washington may also be used as a kosher mikveh. Consult with me about your preference.

Male candidates will need to set up an appointment with the mohel to arrange for Hatafat Dam Brit (symbolic circumcision) or an actual adult circumcision if necessary. This is done several days before the appearance before the Beit Din.

III. Conversion as a Personal Decision

Conversion is a highly personal decision. It is also a profound act of commitment and purpose. Becoming Jewish can be a transforming and joyful experience. It also involves sacrifice and leave-taking. Because of this the Rabbi does not pressure conversion candidates to convert. However, because of the demands on the Rabbi's time, a candidate should only sign up for this process after becoming certain of a desire to convert. If you need more time to decide, take classes, attend services at your own pace. There is no rush.

If you feel ready to proceed, please read the material enclosed in this packet and send in the application and relevant materials. After doing this, please call the synagogue to schedule an appointment with me. I look forward to meeting with you.

Rabbi Jill Borodin

**Living Judaism
Congregation Beth Shalom
Registration for 2010-2011**

Please Return to: Congregation Beth Shalom; 6800 35th Ave NE; Seattle, WA 98115 or FAX: (206) 525-5095
Early Bird registration deadline September 15, 2010 to qualify for 5% discount

Date _____

Name(s) _____

Phone (h) _____ (w) _____ Cell phone _____

E-Mail _____ Fax _____

Address _____ City/Zip _____

Studying for conversion to Judaism: YES NO

Date of Meeting & Orientation with Rabbi Borodin _____

Hebrew Class (23 sessions) 7:00 - 8:00PM

Living Judaism (23 sessions) 8:15 - 9:30PM

\$450* Individual (member)

\$550* Individual (non-member)

\$600* Partners Discount (members) – it's OK if only one and not both are members

\$700* Partners Discount (non-members)

*Tuition includes the cost of one of our Hebrew courses as well as the Living Judaism course (fees do not include the cost of books or materials.)

Payment Schedule

Full Payment

Post-dated checks for full amount payable by December 31.

Financial Consideration

Financial consideration is kept in strict confidence. Indicate the amount that you feel you can afford to pay for the program. _____

Please indicate to us how you would like to pay the amount above. _____

Early Withdrawal

Beth Shalom cannot refund fees for early withdrawal after January 1, 2011.

Signature _____ Date _____

Signature _____ Date _____

[For Office Use Only]

Original to Rabbi's Assistant

ALT File created in Chaver-ware

Add to Adult Ed roster

Copy to Rabbi Borodin

Copy with check to Bookkeeper

Copy to Program Director

Bill total course fee

Apply payment