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NEWS & VIEWS

January 10, 2019 | 4 Shevat 5779



Rabbinical School Winter Conference:

"The Past and Future of Synagogues"

[Rabbinical School of Hebrew College](#) will hold a day-long conference, "The Past and Future of Synagogues," on Monday, January 28. The conference, which is open to the public, will feature academics, rabbis, and community leaders from around the country examining how synagogues are transforming given demographic changes within the American Jewish Community. View a [full list of speakers](#).

"Many synagogues are in trouble," says Rabbi Dan Judson, Rabbinical School Dean. "Membership has dropped and they are struggling financially. But there are also a lot of exciting stories about new and emergent Jewish communities. We're bringing together thought-leaders and practitioners from the some of the most innovative synagogues in America to reflect on the issues facing congregations today."

Session highlights include:

- **Jonathan Sarna**, Joseph H. & Belle R. Braun Professor of American Jewish History at Brandeis University, will kick off the day with a talk on "Lessons from Synagogues Past to Help Synagogues Future."
- **Rabbi Lizzie Heydeman**, spiritual leader at Mishkan Chicago, will discuss how she created a new vibrant synagogue in Chicago.
- **Rabbis Jessica Kate Meyer, Rab`14**, Rabbi/Chazzan at [The Kitchen](#) in San Francisco, and **David Fainsilber, Rab`14**, spiritual leader of the Jewish Community of Stowe in Stowe, VT, in conversation with **Lex Rofeberg, IFJE Cert`18**, co-host of the popular Jewish podcast, [Judaism Unbound](#), discussing the role of music in transforming synagogues.
- **Yusufi Vali**, executive director of The Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center Mosque in Roxbury, and **Rev. Bill Burke**, pastor of Grace Church in Lexington, will discuss what synagogues can learn from churches and mosques.

Rabbi Judson said he came up with the idea for the conference while writing his new book, *Pennies for Heaven: The History of American Synagogues and Money*, which was published last year and was just named a finalist for the [Celebrate 350 Award in American Jewish Studie by The National Jewish Book Council](#). The book focuses on how synagogues have sustained themselves economically throughout American history and how they will have to adjust to maintain themselves given contemporary changes in Jewish life.

"What I really wanted to do was have a conference on the past and future of American synagogues and the ways synagogues are transforming today. There are a lot of exciting movements happening in Boston, Chicago, Detroit, and other cities around the country, many involving Hebrew College alumni," Judson said.

For more information and/or to make a lunch reservation (lunch fee \$12), please contact [Laurena Rosenberg](#).

(Pictured: Rabbi Philip Sherman, Rab`13, Associate Rabbi at Temple Beth Elohim in Wellesley, MA)

Learn more



Still Time to Register for Winter/Spring Courses

Registration is open for all Hebrew College credit and non-credit courses for community members—including [Hebrew Language Ulpan on-campus](#) and [Modern Hebrew Online](#). Study alongside our graduate students or choose an adult learning course and learn with your peers.

Questions about courses? Please ask us.

Rabbinical School: [Rabbi Daniel Klein](#)
Associate Dean of Admissions & Student Life

Jewish Education & Hebrew Language: [Deb Ron](#)
Assistant, Shoolman Graduate School of Education

School of Jewish Music: [Marcia Spellman](#)
Program Administrator

Adult Learning: [Anna Katzevman](#)
Program Administrator

[View Courses](#)



Jewish Genealogy: Discover Your Family History

8 Wednesday Evenings at Hebrew College: March 6 to May 8, 2019

The [Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Boston \(JGSGB\)](http://www.jsgsb.org) will be running their award-winning course on how to research your Jewish family history at Hebrew College this spring at Hebrew College. The course, which will be taught from 7-9:30 p.m. on eight Wednesdays beginning March 6, 2019, is designed for beginners and for those who have started their family research.

Lectures are accompanied by individual help sessions and hands-on workshops on using online resources and genealogy software programs. [Ancestry](http://www.ancestry.com) and [MyHeritage](http://www.myheritage.com) kindly offer students free access to their services for the duration of the course. Tuition is \$250.

[Learn more](#)

[Register for the course](#)

IN THE NEWS

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Hebrew College President **Rabbi Sharon Cohen Anisfeld**, Rabbinical School Associate Dean **Rabbi Jane Kanarek**, and **Rabbi Ayalon Eliach Rab` 18**, spoke at Harvard Law School in December about the challenges of teaching and learning halakhah in a pluralistic school. Their remarks were among the keynote addresses at the “Progressive Halakhah Conference” which brought thinkers from across the Jewish legal landscape to examine different aspects of the ongoing debate about the nature and meaning of halakhah and its evolution in our generation.

December 30-January 1, **Rabbis Arthur Green, Nehemia Polen, Ebn Leader, and Or Rose** joined a

dozen other scholars and educators at the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem for an international conference dedicated to the subject of the teaching of the Hasidic homily (*d'rashah* in Hebrew). Participants reflected on their teaching philosophies and various techniques and challenges that arise when working with Hasidic sources in various educational settings. The seminar was convened by Dr. Elie Holzer of Bar-Ilan University, with support of the Rabbi Dr. David Ochs Chair for Teaching Jewish Religious Studies, and in partnership with Shma Koleinu: A Beit Midrash for Prayer & Community. "This was a wonderful opportunity to meet with outstanding mentors and colleagues from the US and Israel to explore the sacred craft of teaching Hasidism. The organizers and participants all shared generously of themselves throughout the gathering," said Rabbi Rose. The conference proceedings will be published in a forthcoming volume.

Rabbinical School Dean Rabbi Dan Judson was the guest on two episodes of the podcast Judaism Unbound. Part I, which aired on December 7, 2018 was entitled "[From Selling Pews to Temple Dues](#)" and Part II, which aired on December 14, 2018, was entitled "[Pennies from Heaven...and Building Upkeep.](#)" His book *Pennies for Heaven: The History of American Synagogues and Money* was just named a finalist for the [Celebrate 350 Award by a The National Jewish Book Council](#).

EVENTS

Rabbinical School Winter Seminar Conference "The Past and Future of Synagogues"

January 28

Hebrew College

9:15 am - 4:30 pm

Free | Lunch \$12

[RSVP for the event and/or lunch](#)

Eser's The Nosh 2019: Jewish Stories Told Live

January 29

Mameleh's Delicatessen

One Kendall Square, Cambridge, MA

6:30-9:30 pm

\$10 | [Register](#)

Jewish Genealogy: Discover Your Family History

Sponsored by the [Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Boston](#)

Eight Wednesdays, March 6- May 8

7-9:30 p.m.

Hebrew College

[Register](#)

HUMANS OF HEBREW COLLEGE



"On Thanksgiving weekend, I took a deep breath, received a reassuring and proud smile from my husband, and announced to my Jewish in-laws and

my non-Jewish birth family that the recent tragedy in Pittsburgh made me decide to convert..."

(Mia Tavan is Adult Learning Marketing Specialist & Development Associate at Hebrew College.)

[Read More](#)



Posts from this [Hebrew College-hosted blog](#) are published weekly in [Patheos](#).

The Heart and the Hand

Parashat Bo (Exodus 10:1-13:16)

By Cantor Dara Rosenblatt, Can`18, MEd`18
Temple Beth-El, Richmond, VA



On a sunny day in early December I sat in a room full of faith leaders at a local Baptist Church in Richmond, Virginia. Together, we watched a short video about the state of poverty and education in our city. This display of detailed, hard-to-hear information about our city pulled at my heartstrings. There is so much work to be done, and it felt like we were lagging behind. The other leaders around the table were also visibly moved, troubled, and wanting to take action.

In this week's Torah portion, *Bo*, we read that God hardened Pharaoh's heart (Exodus 10:1). Exactly what this means is hard to know. Did God take hold of the ancient tyrant's emotional life or did the Egyptian leader become so accustomed to behaving cruelly that he simply could not turn aside from his wicked ways? In any case, this hardening leads Pharaoh to continue to oppress the Israelites, despite the fact that God brings several new plagues upon the land of Egypt.

It is interesting to note that the Hebrew word for "harden" shares the same root letters as "strengthen," *h-z-k*, which appears in different forms throughout the Torah portion. For example, in Exodus 10:20, we read, "But the Lord **hardened** (*va'yehazek*) Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the Children of Israel go out. Then, in Exodus 13:16, we read, "And so it shall be as a sign upon your hand and as a symbol on your forehead that with a **mighty hand** (*hozek yad*) *Adonai* freed us from Egypt."

Read more



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