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# NEWS & VIEWS

January 31, 2019 | 25 Shevat 5779

Update & Blog Edition

## President's Update

Dear friends,

As our students return for their second semester, and I begin my second semester as Hebrew College President, I want to share a few exciting college updates.



### Strategic Planning Underway

In early December, I assembled a team of Board members, faculty and staff, Jewish community leaders, and individuals with relevant expertise to guide a College-wide Strategic Planning process. The group is focused on identifying and articulating our core mission and distinctive strengths as an institution, and exploring opportunities for increased institutional efficiency, integration, and alignment; strategic innovation and investment; and strategic partnerships. The group will ultimately make recommendations to our [Board of Trustees](#) regarding directions for a new operational and business model to ensure a foundation for our future sustainability and growth. We are grateful for the wisdom and hard work of the exceptionally talented and committed group of volunteers who are leading this project.

### Real Estate

We have another dedicated group of volunteers who have stepped up to help with Hebrew College's

search for a new home. We are working with a pair of commercial real estate brokers with deep experience and expertise in the Boston markets, and are beginning to get a sense of the real estate landscape in the area. We have several years before we need to move, based on the agreements of our sale, so the search is in its early stages. We expect that the Strategic Planning process we complete this spring will help guide our real estate search and future real estate decisions as we move into the next academic year.

### Recent Happenings

It has been a joyful few days at Hebrew College. Last weekend, our [rabbinical](#) and [cantorial](#) students and faculty began the semester with a Shabbaton, filled with beautiful davening, learning, and shared meals in faculty and student homes. Sunday afternoon, the teens in our [JTFCB](#) (Jewish Teen Foundation of Greater Boston) program gathered for an exciting kick-off program, learning about philanthropy and Jewish values from an amazing array of leaders in our community—as they prepare to begin their spring fundraising campaign to support organizations working on immigration, preventing child abuse, and criminal justice reform.

On Monday, the [Rabbinical School](#), with support from CJP's Leadership Training Institute, hosted a day-long conference, *The Past and Future of Synagogues*, featuring scholars and practitioners from around the country, including several of our own alumni. More than 100 guests—many from synagogues throughout the Greater Boston area—joined us to learn about the changing landscape of synagogue life and to reflect on some of the most successful models of innovation and transformation. On Tuesday, more than 100 young adults attended *The Nosh*, a storytelling event at Mamelah's in Cambridge, hosted by [Eser](#), one of our community learning programs, with support from a CJP Young Adult Innovation Grant.

### Looking Ahead

As we look ahead to our Centennial Celebration in the fall of 2021, I continue to be awed by the talent, dedication, and hard work of so many individuals who are deeply committed to our educational mission of fostering deep learning and inspiring leadership for a spiritually vibrant, pluralistic, and purposeful Jewish community. I see the results of these efforts every day. We are expanding our board; we are benefitting from the support of committed donors—both those of the past with whom we are reconnecting, and new ones with whom we are engaging for the first time; we are reaching more local and national audiences through our wonderful new website, multiple social media channels, and other creative marketing efforts; we are forging new educational partnerships; and we are seeing exciting growth in applications to our ordination programs for rabbinical and Rav-Hazzan students. And the fiscal stability afforded by the sale of the campus last summer has given us an exciting opportunity to plan ahead for an even more vibrant future.

We also hope you'll join us on **Thursday evening, May 30** for our annual spring event. Save the date and watch for information soon!

In a time of polarization and discord in so much of our nation and our world, it is a remarkable gift to come to work every day in a place where people are motivated by a shared sense of purpose, a deep desire to teach and to learn, and a longing to serve the wider community with creativity, compassion, and courage.

Thank you for being part of our inspirational community.

Blessings,

San Jose State

# 70 FACES OF TORAH

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

## New Perspective, New Lens

Parashat Mishpatim (Exodus 21:1-24:18)

By Rabbi Jessica Kate Meyer, Rab`14  
Rabbi/Chazzan, [The Kitchen](#) in San Francisco, CA



There's a curious scene at the end of *parashat Mishpatim*. After a litany of law codes, a quiet coda to last week's thunderous revelation. Blink and you might miss it.

In Exodus 24, Moshe climbs partway up the mountain, accompanied by Aaron, Aaron's sons Nadav and Avihu, and 70 'elders'. They stop. They see the God of Israel, and they eat and drink. No fire and *shofarot*, no clouds of smoke and quaking mountains, just a select group on a hike. They see God, then sit down for a picnic.

But what did they see? No one's allowed to see God and live! Moshe will nestle in the crag of a rock so as not to see Divine Presence. Last week, the Israelites shivered inside a holding pen, lest they get too close and spy God's image.

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