Making Space for Mystery

Parashat Shemini (Leviticus 9:1-11:47)

By Rabbi Adina Allen, Rab`14
Co-founder & Creative Director, The Jewish Studio Project

Aaron’s first role as High Priest is to make the inaugural sacrifice on the newly-completed altar. Moses commands Aaron to offer up — amongst other animals — an egel (calf) to atone for himself and the people. That Moses commands the sacrifice of an egel is curious. Rather than a par (bull), as Leviticus
4:3 dictates for this kind of purification offering, Aaron is told to sacrifice an *egel*. Nowhere else in Torah is an *egel* mentioned as a sacrificial animal, making this all the more notable.

It wasn’t so long before that Aaron had a different experience with an *egel*. A few weeks ago, we read of Aaron’s construction of the *Egel HaZahav* — the Golden Calf. In *Parshat Ki Tissa*, Moses goes up the mountain to receive the Ten Commandments from God. The people, distressed and forlorn as they await Moses’ return, demand Aaron make them a god to go before them, saying “for that man Moses, who brought us from the land of Egypt — we do not know what has happened to him” (Exodus 32:1). Aaron responds by asking the people to bring him gold rings from their wives, sons, and daughters. He then takes the gold he has collected and melts it down into the *Egel HaZahav*, saying, “This is your god, O Israel, who brought you out of the land of Egypt!” (Exodus 32:7). The creation of the *Egel HaZahav* provoked God’s wrath and led to the Israelites’ punishment.

Read more

---

**STATE OF FORMATION**

State of Formation is a joint venture of Hebrew College’s Miller Center for Interreligious Learning & Leadership and Boston University’s School of Theology. Elizabeth Little, a senior at Bentley University, is a fellow in the Boston Interfaith Leadership Initiative (BILI), a program for undergraduate students run through the Miller Center at Hebrew College. BILI trains students from Boston-area colleges to serve as effective interreligious leaders on their campuses and in the broader community.

**An Interfaith Holiday Display: How I Grew to Celebrate Difference**

By Elizabeth Little

BILI Fellow, Miller Center for Interreligious Learning & Leadership

The excitement, preparation, and unique family traditions that accompany religious holidays are seen across every religious and spiritual tradition. I know firsthand how easy it is to become so excited and invested in my own religious traditions that I forget to think about how my friends and family from other faith traditions also may be celebrating. As an Orthodox Christian, Christmas is a significant holiday in my household. All my life, we have celebrated Christmas with family on December 25th and with my church on January 7th, which is Eastern Orthodox Christmas due to the following of the Gregorian calendar. Each year, I become wrapped up in the Christmas traditions of picking out a tree, decorating our house, and preparing for a twelve-dish dinner for our second Christmas Eve on January
6th.

I love all the feelings that accompany this time of year and the traditions that go along with them. Being able to share in the excitement surrounding Christmas in my predominantly Catholic community and then share in the traditions of the Eastern Orthodox Church with my parish not long after has always been special to me. I was always eager to explain to my friends, teachers, and coworkers why January 7th is an important date to me and my religious traditions.
RSVP | Make a Gift in Cantor Mayer’s Honor

Nava Tehila Ensemble Concert
Co-sponsored by Hebrew College
May 12 | 7-9 pm
Temple Beth Zion, Brookline, MA
$20 General Admission | $15 Students & Seniors
Purchase Tickets

A Mini-Symposium: Ethnic Identity and Choral Singing
Sponsored by Zamir Chorale of Boston Alumni Association and the School of Jewish Music at Hebrew College
May 15 | 7:30-9:30 pm
Hebrew College
Learn More | Free Admission

Torah Godly Play
May 19-20
8 am-3 pm
Hebrew College
Learn more | Register

Rabbinical Ordination
June 2 | 3 pm
Temple Reyim, Newton MA
Information

Ani Kinor: Prayer Leader Summer Institute
Two-Day Intensive
June 3-4
Hebrew College
Learn more | Register

A Joyful Concert for Body & Soul
with Rabbi Jessica Kate Meyer `14, Dr. Hankus Netsky & Cantor Becky Khitrik `14
June 3 | 7-9 pm
Hebrew College
$10 General Admission
Learn More | Purchase Tickets

---

Hebrew College | 160 Herrick Road | Newton Centre, MA 02459
617.559.8600 | www.hebrewcollege.edu | Donate