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# NEWS & VIEWS

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Blog Edition

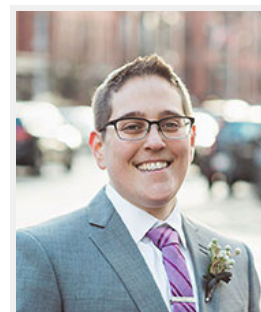
## 70 FACES OF TORAH

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

### We Rise and We Crash: Prayer and Resistance

*Parashat Va-etchanean (Deuteronomy 3:23-7:11)*

By Rabbi Becky Silverstein, Rab` 14  
Rabbi/Founder of Beyn Kodesh l'Chol



“There’s an active mass shooting, we are fine.” My friend Jordyn and her spouse, Justin, live in El Paso. This text began a series of images from El Paso. Jordyn and Justin are photo-journalists, and so our text thread is often filled with images of detention camps on our border, of artwork made by children in Tornillo, of families waiting in Ciudad Juarez, of clergy demonstrating, and so on. These images are not unlike the photos of children grappling with the sudden absence of parents after ICE raids at food

processing plants in Mississippi. These images are not unlike those of climate refugees seeking shelter and sustenance. The feeling in my heart and body is not unlike the feeling I have when I remember that people are marching in the streets yelling “Jews will not replace us” or when I see images of swastikas in dorm rooms.

Day after day the current events of the world call us to respond. What does it mean to be human? What is our connection to other people? What can we do?

As we approached this past weekend’s observance of Tisha B’Av, a holiday commemorating the destruction of the Temple, I wondered what it meant to remember one crash while in the midst of another. The language of crash, learned from my teacher R’ Benay Lappe, describes a moment in which one’s deeply held belief or understanding of how the world works is called into question. As a result of the destruction of the Temple, Judaism as it had been known ceased to exist. Amidst the fear and instability, Rabbinic Judaism, the seeds of which already existed, emerged. The crash of today may be different for each of us—climate change, white supremacy, racism, government policy— but it is happening to all of us.

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# COMMUNITY LEARNING



## What Hebrew College "Open Circle" Means to Me

By Deborah Feinstein, MAJS `06, Me'ah `99

[Hebrew College Open Circle Jewish Learning](#) participant



To be able to be a lifelong learner and to study with a true, authentic teacher is a blessing. When I sit with my study partners who have had a wide range of learning experiences—from Me’ah to a Masters in Jewish Studies at Hebrew College, and from different religions as well—I find other ways to see, to listen, to understand. My world opens.

As a visual learner and an artist, I have made here an expression of what “Open Circle” means to me. To me, our study is 2 circles, intertwined. It does not matter the “subject” of the course; what matters is the interchange of ideas, of perceptions, of thoughts. The circles are as endless as our ways of interpretations. This endless circle reflects the never-ending life of the Torah. And indeed, the Torah is brought to life as I sit in my class, learning how to be a better person. Chapter 12, “ Why was the Torah given in the desert? To teach you that unless one makes oneself “hefker” (open, ownerless, free) as the desert, one will not merit the words of the Torah.” The Torah was given to all in an ownerless desert and received by those who will make themselves open like the desert.

Surrounding this word and forming an interior shape are rose flowers, connected by dynamic lines that reverberate in all directions reverberating between each other. These roses are my study partners, interacting. Lastly, each circle shows a road that goes into the mountains. There is sunset and sunrise... the continuing cycles of my Jewish journey.

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*Deborah Feinstein was a museum director, educator, and curator for over 25 years. Feinstein has a graduate degree in Islamic art and has lectured on religious, historical, and cultural connections of the three major religions through the visual arts at numerous universities and museums. She completed a [master’s program in Jewish Studies](#) at Hebrew College, as well as Hebrew College’s [Me’ah program](#), and has been studying in an Open Circle class with Hebrew College President Rabbi Sharon Cohen Anisfeld for the last few years. She is President Emeritus of the Vilna Shul, Boston’s Center for Jewish Culture.*

*Hebrew College Open Circle Jewish Learning is one of our many [community learning programs](#) for all*

ages and stages, taught within a pluralistic environment of open inquiry, depth, creativity, and compassion.

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