



NEWS & VIEWS

February 13, 2020 | 18 Shevat 5780



Seeing Torah

A Visual Midrash

Hebrew College Launches New Community Gallery

When completing her [master's program in Jewish Studies](#) at Hebrew College, Deb Feinstein explored [Torah through art](#). A visual learner, she would complete her final exams with images, rather than essays, and then write explanations of her artwork.

Now, as a community learning student in Hebrew College President Rabbi Sharon Cohen Anisfeld's [Open Circle Jewish Learning](#) class and a member of the [Hebrew College Board of Trustees](#), Feinstein wants to bring that opportunity to other visual learners – enabling artists to share their visual interpretations of Torah and community members to learn in new and different ways through a gallery space in Hebrew College's Cutler Atrium.

"I learn visually. I am not a textual learner. When I took my finals, a lot of my explanations came visually and through the visual came the textual," said Feinstein, a former museum director, educator and curator. "Everybody has different ways of learning and different ways of interpreting knowledge. We want to enable artists to be able to share their personal expressions of Jewish texts, and to make those expressions available to the wider public, offering the community a way of learning Torah visually, as well as textually."

creative dialogue with Jewish texts for display in the Cutler Atrium. The first exhibit, which will run from March 24 through June 14, is "[Seeing Torah](#)," a visual diary documenting artist Anita Rabinoff-Goldman's study and artistic response to each of the 54 portions of the Torah over the cycle of a single Jewish year. There will be an opening reception on March 24, from 6 to 8 pm, with refreshments and remarks from Rabbi Anisfeld and the artist.

[Read More about the Gallery](#)

[RSVP for "Seeing Torah" Opening](#)

TODAY AT HEBREW COLLEGE!

Evangelical Identities in the Year 2020: Spirituality, Politics, and the Common Good



February 13 | 4:30-6 pm | Hebrew College

Join us for a soulful exploration of theology, interreligious dialogue, and civic engagement with three outstanding progressive Evangelical leaders and activists: Pastor Doug Pagitt, artist and singer Meah Pace, and Pastor Samir Selmanovic. Our encounter will include music, storytelling, and personal reflection. This event is sponsored by the [Rabbinical School of Hebrew College](#) and the [Betty Ann Greenbaum Miller Center for Interreligious Learning & Leadership at Hebrew College](#).

"This is an unusual opportunity for our community to meet and learn with a group of outstanding Christian leaders and activists, whose voices are not regularly a part of mainstream media presentations," said Rabbi Or Rose, director of the Miller Center. "We are excited to welcome Pastor Doug and his colleagues to Hebrew College for an open-hearted exploration of religious values and civic engagement."

Doug Pagitt is the Executive Director and a founder of [Vote Common Good](#). An author, pastor, social activist, and leading voice for progressive Christianity, he makes frequent appearances in the national media and recently published "Outdoing Jesus."

Samir Selmanović Ph.D., PCC is co-chair and Director of Strategy and Partnerships at Vote Common Good. He grew up in a European Muslim family, served for 12 years as an ordained Evangelical pastor, and founded an interfaith organization in New York City. Over the years, he has been an ally to individuals and organizations who want to "grow simpler and practice real change in real time."

Meah Pace is a singer in the dance/punk band "!!!" (Chk Chk Chk) and in the Resistance Revival Chorus, a new group spearheaded by the organizers of the Women's March. She is also a presence on the Brooklyn soul scene through work with Binky Griptite's "The Mellomatics," Reverend Vince Anderson's "Love Choir," and her own band, "The MAP Legends."



Together we made it to double *Chai*!

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Hebrew College *Chai* Challenge, helping us secure \$36,000 from a generous donor by Tu B'Shevat.

We hope you'll experience some of these upcoming Hebrew College learning opportunities that you have helped make possible.

- Join over 1,500 adult learners and take a community learning course. View our [course catalog](#);
- Visit the ["Seeing Torah" art exhibit opening](#) at Hebrew College on March 24 at 6 pm;
- Watch a special screening of the film ["Children of the Inquisition"](#) on April 23 at 6:30 pm, followed by a Q&A with the film's director and Rabbi Or Rose, Director of the [Betty Ann Greenbaum Miller Center for Interreligious Learning & Leadership at Hebrew College](#).

We also hope you will join us for our spring event [LEADERSHIP, LEARNING, AND LOVE](#) on April 29 at Temple Israel, Boston.

Todah rabah. Thank you for investing in Jewish leadership and learning with your gift to Hebrew College!

70 FACES OF TORAH



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

Aligning Our Visions, Systems, and Actions

Parashat Yitro (Exodus 18:1-20:23)

Member, Hebrew College Board of Trustees



This week we read about the central event in the collective consciousness of the Jewish people: the revelation at Sinai. *Parashat Yitro* (the Torah portion of Jethro) vividly describes the activities and prohibitions that were to prepare the Israelites for the coming experience. Fire and smoke, blasting horns, and quaking mountains lead to this seminal event in the memory of *Am Yisrael* (the Jewish people). And yet, if this great revelatory event was transcendent and other-worldly, it is immediately preceded and followed by texts that seem far more ordinary. In chapter 18 of Exodus, we read what we might today call the community's organizational system, and in the latter part of chapter 20, a set of rules about idolatry that continues into the next portion.

As a child, I learned a powerful insight from the great medieval commentator Rashi that has stuck with me over the years. In fine rabbinic fashion, he posed his insight in the form of a rhetorical question: "*Mah inyan Shmitah etzel Har Sinai?*" "Why is the matter of the Sabbatical Year [and the Jubilee] placed next to [a reference to] Mount Sinai?" What an inviting way to inquire about the relationship among adjacent, and seemingly unrelated, statements! The question can be used more broadly to consider the relationship between any two proximate items that appear at first glance to be disconnected.

Read more

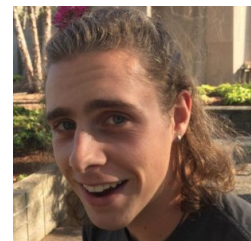
COMMUNITY LEARNING

STATE OF FORMATION

State of Formation, an offshoot of the *Journal of Interreligious Studies*, is a joint venture of the [Miller Center for Interreligious Learning & Leadership at Hebrew College](#) and [Boston University's School of Theology](#). The Miller Center offers professional development and [community learning](#) opportunities for students of all ages, stages and backgrounds, within a pluralistic environment of open inquiry, depth, creativity, and compassion.

Learning Together: Navigating Communal Reflection and Action

By **John Lazur**
Boston Interfaith Leadership Initiative (BILI) Fellow



In the fall of my freshman year, on the Friday before classes started, I attended my first Shabbat service at Tufts. We came together under the auspices of an interfaith-focused pre-orientation, [CAFE](#), and for the majority of the group – myself included – this was the first Shabbat service they had

prayers. There were no rules to participating, but we were encouraged to engage as we felt comfortable – listening, humming, singing, harmonizing, clapping. These *niggunim* opened a door to religious community that I was unfamiliar with. Without words, there was no barrier for me to understand the practice, and raising our voices together illuminated the focus of the Shabbat service for me – being with one another in a moment of reflection.

I have come back to this moment again and again, and I can confidently say it was instrumental in pushing me to more intentionally pursue interfaith community. In these interfaith spaces, I have been struck, unfailingly, by the meager understanding I have of other traditions. I grew up as a Unitarian Universalist Humanist, attending a congregation in Minneapolis weekly, and my religious perspectives were largely influenced by our intellectual and cognitive-oriented community. My religious education revolved around asking questions of ultimate concern – “The Big Questions,” as we called them – and learning about other religions. Access to this religious literacy has been foundational for my college interfaith work, but in the moment, it distanced me from people’s lived religiosity. I thought of religious traditions as sets of rules and prescribed rituals to be followed, void of any personal elements. In my first interfaith experiences, the realization of how little I knew consumed my focus. I forgot the importance of knowing *religious people* and sought to know the *religions* as systems.

[Read more](#)

EVENTS



April 29, 2020

Save the Date for our Spring Event!

Leadership, Learning, and Love

An evening of music, conversation, and celebration

6:30 pm at Temple Israel, Boston

[Learn more](#)

TODAY! Evangelical Identities in the Year 2020: Spirituality, Politics, and the Common Good

A soulful exploration of theology, interreligious dialogue, and civic engagement with three outstanding progressive Evangelical leaders and activists: Pastor Doug Pagitt, artist and singer Meah Pace, and Pastor Samir Selmanovic.

CEO Forum with John Hirschtick

Please join us for a kosher breakfast and networking event for Jewish professionals featuring Jon Hirschtick, Executive Vice President of SaaS at [PTC](#), and moderated by Aron Ain, CEO of [Kronos](#).

February 15 | 4:30-6 pm
Hebrew College Alumni Dining Hall
Free and Open to the Public
[Learn more](#)

Azamra: Alternative Shabbat Community Minyan

Join Rabbi Lev Friedman, Rab`18, for a morning service in the Hebrew College Beit Midrash, followed by a pot-luck vegetarian kiddush luncheon. Supported by the [Hebrew College Innovation Lab](#).

February 22 | 10 am - 12 pm
Hebrew College Beit Midrash
[Learn more](#)

February Yom Iyyun: Teen Mental Health

A Hebrew College Rabbinical School and School of Jewish Music Yom Iyyun on Teen Mental Health with Support from the Ruderman Synagogue Inclusion Project – a partnership between the Ruderman Family Foundation and Combined Jewish Philanthropies.

February 26 | 9 am - 3:30 pm
Hebrew College
[Learn more](#)

MARCH

**Teens Take Action Open House:
Learning Philanthropy to Make Change**

Hebrew College's Jewish Teen Foundation of Greater Boston (JTJFGB) hosts an evening of learning how JTJFGB teens are making a difference in the Greater Boston community.

March 3 | 7-8:30 pm
Hebrew College
[Learn more](#)

[Learn more and RSVP](#)

Seeing Torah Gallery Opening

"Seeing Torah" is a visual diary documenting artist Anita Rabinoff-Goldman's study and artistic response to each of the 54 portions of the Torah over the cycle of a single Jewish year. Refreshments will be served.

March 24 | 6 pm
Hebrew College
Free and Open to the Public
[Learn more and Register](#)

Re-envisioning Jewish Inclusion in 2020 and Beyond: How Interfaith Couples & Families Belong

A one-day program including panel discussion, text study, and presentations. Supported by the [Hebrew College Innovation Lab](#). Breakfast and lunch available.

March 26 | 8 am - 4 pm
Hebrew College
[Learn more](#)

