



LIBRARY COPYRIGHT NOTICE

www.huc.edu/libraries

Regulated Warning

See Code of Federal Regulations, Title 37, Volume 1, Section 201.14:

The copyright law of the United States (title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material.

Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specific conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be “used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research.” If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of “fair use,” that user may be liable for copyright infringement.

This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law.

וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ With All Your Being:
A Spiritual Curriculum for Rabbis-in-Formation

Madeline Torop Budman

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Ordination

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion
Rabbinical Program
Cincinnati, Ohio

March 14, 2024
4 Adar II 5784

Advisor: Rabbi Jan Katzew, Ph.D.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Introduction.....	1
Part One: Context and Conclusions	
Chapter One: Spirituality, Authenticity, and Rabbis-in-Formation	4
Spirituality and Authenticity: The Problem	4
Curriculum in Context	8
The Landscape Today	12
Chapter Two: The Case for a Spiritual Curriculum	21
Demonstrated Need.....	21
Towards Integration	23
The Rabbi-in-Formation as the Human-in-Formation.....	25
Part Two: The Curriculum	
Chapter Three: וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ With All Your Being: A Spiritual Curriculum for Rabbis-in-Formation	28
The Three Pillars.....	30
The Path	36
Curriculum Map.....	49
Curriculum Overview and Timeline	51
Chapter Four: The Proposed Curriculum.....	53
Shleimut	53
Zerizut	64
Hazon	72
Coursework.....	81
Co-Curriculars.....	87
Electives.....	93
Conclusion	103
Bibliography	106

Abstract

The modern rabbi plays many roles: teacher, preacher, scholar, chaplain, counselor, leader, organizer, manager, fundraiser, and so on. To address these varied and important needs, programs for rabbinic ordination train rabbis to be “generalists,” with broad knowledge and skills within many different topics. The rabbinic curriculum at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion seeks to balance academic scholarship with practical skill acquisition. Spirituality is a critical third element missing from the curriculum.

Through this rabbinic capstone, I aim to demonstrate that a spiritual curriculum for rabbis-in-formation is both implementable by HUC-JIR and desired by its constituents. I do so through conducting interviews with rabbis in the field, many of whom are at the forefront of innovative Jewish spiritual education, as well as analyzing reports commissioned by HUC-JIR. I then propose an original model of a spiritual curriculum for rabbinic formation, drawing upon theories of adult learning and spiritual development.

Chapter One describes the current crisis of spiritual authenticity, contextualizing the problem in the history of HUC-JIR’s curriculum development and surveying other rabbinic programs and post-ordination rabbinic education. Chapter Two argues that formalizing spiritual development within the rabbinic curriculum is necessary to face urgent challenges in the Jewish community. Chapter Three proposes a spiritual curriculum, grounding pedagogic decisions in Jewish tradition and specifying its educational aims. Chapter Four details each element of the four-year curricular path, including key texts, enduring understandings, essential questions, desired outcomes, coursework, co-curriculars, electives, and evidence of learning.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, to my advisor, teacher, and mentor, Rabbi Jan Katzew: thank you for being a true exemplar of a תלמיד חכם, for modeling what it means to be a רב, and for guiding me with wisdom, patience, and integrity. It has been a privilege and a highlight of my rabbinic formation to learn from you.

To Rabbi Andrea Weiss, Rabbi Carla Fenves, and the participants of “The Future of Clergy Formation: An HUC-JIR Think Tank” in October 2022: thank you for including me in these critical conversations, inspiring me and giving me the tools to launch my capstone.

To Rabbis David Adelson, Adina Allen, Jordan Braunig, Josh Feigelson, Cheryl Peretz, Ruth Sohn, and Shawn Zevit: thank you for generously sharing your Torah with me. This capstone could not be possible without your insights. I felt the Shekhinah fully present in our conversations, and you have each deeply impacted my own spiritual formation.¹

To Nina Loftspring and Rabbis Erin Binder and Meredith Kahan: thank you for mentoring me in education, curriculum writing, and the spiritual formation of our young learners. So much of what I’ve learned in the past five years has been from you.

To Barbara Dragul: thank you for igniting my love for education in PDE 402, and inspiring me with your endless compassion, courage, and authenticity.

To my parents and my sister: thank you for nurturing my curiosity, encouraging me to tackle big questions, and for giving me strong examples of what it means to be authentic.

Finally, to Aaron: thank you for being my spiritual chevrotah partner for life. Every day I am grateful that I get to be in formation alongside you.

¹“Two who sit [together] with the words of Torah between them – the Shekhinah [Divine Presence] is [fully] present between them.” Pirkei Avot 3:3, trans. Martin S. Cohen, Tamar Elad-Appelbaum, and Gordon Tucker, *Pirkei Avot Lev Shalem: The Wisdom of Our Sages* (New York: The Rabbinical Assembly, 2018), 115.

Introduction

As a third-year rabbinic student at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institution for Religion in Cincinnati, I struggled to articulate why I was not feeling satisfied with my education. It certainly had nothing to do with the quality of my classes, or the rigor of the academics. I knew that I was learning from world-class professors, that the subject matters of the courses required a high degree of scholarship, and that I had unparalleled access to resources through the Klau Library and the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives. But something was missing. I wondered if I wanted more Torah in my professional classes training me for the practical elements of the rabbinate, or perhaps more opportunities to practically apply what I studied in my academic text-based classes. Neither of these possibilities adequately addressed the dissatisfaction I felt.

During an informal conversation with rabbis and cantors in which I once again attempted to articulate what I was missing, one of the assembled HUC-JIR alumni made a gesture that finally hit the mark. She used her thumb to point at her stomach, and then sweep upwards towards her heart. That's what I was aching for: an inner wellspring of Torah, a feeling in my *kishkes*.¹ I was experiencing a profound lack of spiritual authenticity in my rabbinic education.

Once I could identify and name this hole in my education, I quickly came to realize that I was not alone in my desire for guided spiritual development within rabbinic school. In the fall of 2022, I sat in on "The Future of Clergy Formation: An HUC-JIR Think Tank," and I took notes for subsequent focus groups on the same topic in my role as a student intern. While everyone shared different opinions on the curriculum and what rabbis ought to receive

¹Yiddish for innards, insides; a gut feeling.

in school before entering the field, a dearth of spirituality was the one consistent throughline. Over and over again, ordainees of HUC-JIR across campuses and generations emphasized that they were not able to cultivate their spiritual life as students. One HUC-JIR ordainee asserted, “You can never learn every single text and tool in school, but you need to be able to know yourself.” Current students complained that they are “missing the beautiful things” in their clergy formation process and are forced to bifurcate their spirituality and their skills of service leading.² In the 2015 report titled “Envisioning the Future of Reform Clergy Education,” students, members of faculty, and administrators across all four campuses of HUC-JIR expressed concerns about the lack of formal spiritual development opportunities for clergy-in-formation.³

I believe the challenges of spiritual formation in the seminary can be understood through the first line of the V’ahavta: “וְאָהַבְתָּ אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל-מְאֹדְךָ”⁴ The commonly accepted English translation of this verse is automatic for so many of us: “And you shall love Adonai your God with all your *heart*, with all your *soul*, and with all your *might*.” However, through the lens of spiritual development, I have come to prefer Everett Fox’s translation and accompanying explanation: “So you are to love YHWH your God with all your *heart*, with all your *being*, with all your *substance*!”⁵ While Fox translates לב as “heart,” he explains that in the ancient world, the mind was thought to dwell in the heart, not the brain.⁶ By translating מְאֹד as “substance,” Fox refers to strength or physicality.⁷

²Anonymous interviews with author, 2022.

³Fern Chertok and Leonard Saxe, “Envisioning the Future of Reform Clergy Education” (Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University, 2015), 9-11.

⁴Deuteronomy 6:5.

⁵Everett Fox, *The Five Books of Moses* (New York: Schocken Books, 1995 accessed February 19, 2024), https://www.sefaria.org/The_Five_Books_of_Moses_by_Everett_Fox.

⁶Fox, *The Five Books of Moses*.

⁷Fox, *The Five Books of Moses*.

“Heart” parallels “heart,” and “substance” isn’t a far cry from “might.” But Fox boldly erases the traditional “soul” from his translation and instead renders **וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ** as “with all your being.” He writes, “[**נַפֶּשׁ**] carries a host of meanings: ‘life,’ ... ‘breath,’ ‘self...’ [Translating **נַפֶּשׁ** as ‘soul’] gives the impression of something contrasted to the body—not an idea that appears in the Hebrew Bible.”⁸ In other words, what we call the “soul,” the **נַפֶּשׁ**, is the entirety of the self, inseparable from mind and body.

This capstone, “**וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ** With All Your Being: A Spiritual Curriculum for Rabbis-in-Formation,” is predicated on the belief that spirituality is not one distinct aspect of the rabbi-in-formation that can be turned off and on, but something inherent that is inseparable from the whole person. Over the past year and a half, I have been dreaming about what it might look like to address the entire being at all steps of the rabbinic curriculum. I’ve had conversations with spiritual seekers and spiritual directors alike; I’ve interviewed rabbinic school administrators and rabbis crafting spiritual initiatives in the field; I’ve studied Torah and Jewish spiritual guidebooks and theories of adult learning; and I’ve wrestled with my own spiritual formation. What follows is an experiment in spirituality, an imagining of what rabbinic formation could be.

⁸Fox, *The Five Books of Moses*.

Chapter One: Spirituality, Authenticity, and Rabbis-in-Formation

Spirituality and Authenticity: The Problem

Merriam-Webster's 2023 Word of the Year is "authentic."¹ The word, with its first recorded usage in the 14th century, is an unlikely candidate to join a list that includes recent winners such as "gaslighting," "pandemic," "they," and "-ism."² The word is not quite as buzzy as runners-up, such as "deepfake," "deadname," and Oxford's 2023 Word of the Year, "rizz."³ In the dictionary's announcement, they define "authentic" as "'not false or imitation,' a synonym of *real* and *actual*; and also 'true to one's own personality, spirit, or character.'"⁴ While the definition is straightforward, the concept of authenticity is increasingly challenging to pin down, as indicated by the substantial increase in dictionary searches in 2023 that led to the word's crowning distinction.⁵ We are all searching for authenticity, it seems, and it is becoming harder and harder to find.

In his 1991 work *The Ethics of Authenticity*, Charles Taylor identifies "three malaises of society" that ring true today. While Taylor celebrates freedoms that we enjoy and have been achieved in modernity, he explains that this modern freedom is the result of overturning societal orders with unforeseen consequences. He argues, "The discrediting of these orders has been called the 'disenchantment' of the world. With it, things lost some of their magic."⁶ Taylor summarizes the three malaises: "The first fear is about what we might call a loss of

¹"Word of the Year 2023," Merriam-Webster Inc., November 27, 2023, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/wordplay/word-of-the-year>.

²"Words of the Year," Merriam-Webster Inc., accessed November 27, 2023, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-of-the-year/see-all>.

³"Rizz crowned Oxford Word of the Year 2023," Oxford University Press, December 4, 2023, <https://corp.oup.com/news/rizz-crowned-oxford-word-of-the-year-2023/>.

⁴"Word of the Year 2023."

⁵"Word of the Year 2023."

⁶Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 2-3.

meaning, the fading of moral horizons. The second concerns the eclipse of ends, in face of rampant instrumental reason. And the third is about a loss of freedom.”⁷ The ideal that we must reach for in order to cure these societal ills is authenticity. While Taylor continues to define authenticity throughout his treatise, he begins by explaining that before the discrediting of societal orders, “being in touch with some source – God, say, or the Idea of the Good – was considered essential to full being. Only now the source we have to connect with is deep in us.”⁸ Taylor’s understanding of authenticity can be placed in conversation with Merriam-Webster’s definition, leading to an understanding of authenticity that overlaps with spirituality. Through authentically knowing and being in dialogue with one’s own spirit and internal life and acting upon it, spirituality can be derived from authenticity. And that authenticity is crucial to “full being.”⁹

The idea that we as a society have “lost touch” with God is a trope of modernity for which we consistently find evidence. According to the 2015 Pew Research Center report on religion, nearly 23% of American adults are considered religious “nones.”¹⁰ They are either leaving congregations or are never even walking in the doors. The numbers go up when surveying only Jews as opposed to all American adults: the 2020 Pew Research Center report on Jewish Americans found that 27% of Jewish adults consider themselves “Jews of no religion.”¹¹ The COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated this problem. Overall, Pew reports that religious attendance rates among American adults have declined compared with

⁷Taylor, 10.

⁸Taylor, 26.

⁹Taylor, 26.

¹⁰Pew Research Center, “U.S. Public Becoming Less Religious,” *Pew Research Center*, November 3, 2015, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2015/11/03/u-s-public-becoming-less-religious/>.

¹¹Pew Research Center, “Jewish Americans in 2020,” *Pew Research Center*, May 11, 2021, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2021/05/11/jewish-americans-in-2020/>.

pre-pandemic levels; the rate was estimated at 26% among Jews in 2019, compared to 23% in 2022.¹²

Simultaneously, the “SoulCycle phenomenon,” boutique fitness centers repackaging their exercise classes as spiritual communities, is sending ripples through the religious world. On its homepage, the indoor cycling studio advertises, “SoulCycle is a sanctuary for everyone who walks through our doors. Tears will be shed. Breakthroughs can happen. And the opportunity to make genuine connections is all around you. You are welcome here.”¹³ Spiritual seekers are discovering their spirituality, purpose, and belonging in these capitalist alternatives to traditional worship.¹⁴ The Institute for Jewish Spirituality (IJS) sounds the alarm on this phenomenon in their most recent Strategic Plan:

“When IJS was founded over two decades ago, spiritual practices like meditation and yoga were still seen as ‘out there.’ Today they are multibillion-dollar industries. Children learn these practices in school. Workplaces offer them to their employees. Back then, they were also viewed as outside of Jewish life. Hundreds of thousands of Jews looked to eastern traditions like Buddhism because they sought spiritual practice and couldn’t find it in Judaism. That tells us that there is both an opportunity right now—and an opportunity cost if we fail to act. The opportunity: Engage Jews, especially younger ones, in Jewish spiritual practices like Jewish mindfulness meditation and yoga, and help them reconnect with their tradition, themselves, and the universal life-force. The opportunity cost: If we don’t do so, they are likely to pursue these practices—but outside a Jewish context.”¹⁵

And why shouldn’t they? Jewish leaders are seeking new ways to engage and recruit these “nones” who go elsewhere, but rabbis themselves are experiencing a crisis of authenticity.¹⁶

¹²Justin Nortey and Michael Rotolo, “How the Pandemic Has Affected Attendance at U.S. Religious Services,” *Pew Research Center*, March 28, 2023, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2023/03/28/how-the-pandemic-has-affected-attendance-at-u-s-religious-services/>.

¹³“New to Soul,” SoulCycle, accessed March 3, 2023, <https://www.soul-cycle.com/new-to-soul/>.

¹⁴Sammy Kanter, “Spin, Sweat, and Shakharit?: Where the Spirituality of America’s Health and Wellness Culture Meets Judaism” (rabbinic thesis, HUC-JIR, 2023), 26.

¹⁵“IJS Strategic Plan 2022-2025,” Institute for Jewish Spirituality, accessed December 3, 2023, <https://www.jewishspirituality.org/about/ijs-strategic-plan-2022-2025/>, 10.

¹⁶See Diane Tickton Schuster, *Jewish Lives, Jewish Learning: Adult Jewish Learning in Theory and Practice* (Millburn: Behrman House Publishing, 1999), 57. See also Rachel Werczberger, *Jews in the Age of Authenticity: Jewish Spiritual Renewal in Israel* (New York: Peter Lang, 2017), 25.

In 2015, the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University published a report on its research into the trends and challenges facing Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR), titled “Envisioning the Future of Reform Clergy Education.”¹⁷ The report details:

“In discussions with community key informants, the word ‘authentic’ was repeatedly used to describe clergy best suited to fulfilling their potential as translators of tradition and conveners of community. This term was used in two ways. The first, addressed in the preceding discussion, relates to the desired depth of content knowledge. The second use of the term related to the ability of Reform clergy to model authenticity, as manifested by an ongoing commitment to exploring the meaning and relevance of Jewish tradition. One of the ways in which HUC-JIR describes itself is as a seminary where students can develop their own personal theology, although this was probably the aspect of training that received the most mixed reviews.”¹⁸

The search for authenticity is the search for spirituality. Without a grounding in personal theology and an understanding of “the meaning and relevance of Jewish tradition,” rabbis ordained from HUC-JIR are feeling inauthentic in their roles as spiritual leaders. One HUC-JIR faculty member said it plainly: “It doesn’t help to have the best speaking skills and teaching skills in the world if you don’t have the content to deliver a sermon that’s Jewishly powerful or to teach something that’s Jewishly authentic.”¹⁹ When rabbis themselves struggle to connect spiritually to the worship and practices that they promote, they are unable to “model authenticity,” as the Brandeis report emphasizes. Without authentic spiritual grounding from the messenger, the message rings hollow.

Jews are longing for authentic spiritual connection, and they are increasingly seeking it in non-Jewish spaces.²⁰ In order to address this deep need effectively, rabbis must help

¹⁷Fern Chertok and Leonard Saxe, “Envisioning the Future of Reform Clergy Education” (Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University, 2015), 1.

¹⁸Chertok and Saxe, 8.

¹⁹Chertok and Saxe 6.

²⁰“IJS Strategic Plan 2022-2025,” 10.

those they serve cultivate an authentic spirituality within themselves, bolstered by practices and experiences. And in order for rabbis to cultivate this spirituality in those they serve, they must have clarity in their own spirituality and feel authenticity in their own Jewish lives. Therefore, I propose that implementing a formalized spiritual curriculum for rabbis-in-formation at HUC-JIR has the potential to reinvigorate the rabbinate, and by extension contemporary Jewish spirituality as a whole.

Curriculum in Context

The perception of spiritual holes within the HUC-JIR curriculum is not a new phenomenon. Under the sixth president of HUC-JIR, Dr. Alfred Gottschalk, Dr. Eugene Mihaly chaired a task force on the rabbinic curriculum. Dr. Mihaly was joined by professors Norman J. Cohen, William Cutter, and Barry S. Kogan.²¹ In October 1988, Drs. Mihaly, Cohen, Cutter, and Kogan published their final report: “Innovators of Torah: Preparing Tomorrow’s Rabbis for Reform Judaism, Report of the Task Force on the Rabbinic Curriculum of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion.”²² Dr. Gottschalk’s mandate for the curriculum was threefold: to study the rabbinic curriculum across all four campuses in light of internal and external changes, to engage constituents in the task force’s review, and to submit a report to the president with recommendations for and methodology of

²¹Eugene Mihaly, Norman J. Cohen, William Cutter, and Barry S. Kogan, “Innovators of Torah: Preparing Tomorrow’s Rabbis for Reform Judaism, Report of the Task Force on the Rabbinic Curriculum of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion,” October 1988, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion Records, MS-20/Box J6-6, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1.

²²The title of the report is drawn from this quote featured on the title page: “Happy is the one who innovates Torah. That person is like one who is informed from on high. The Holy Blessed One says: ‘My child, My great house of study is yours,’ as it is written ‘God will choose the innovators’” (Seder Eliahu Rabbah XI).

implementing a new rabbinic curriculum.²³ It was the first formal curricular review conducted by committee in the history of the College.²⁴

Before offering its recommendations, the Task Force summarized responses to the question, “What kind of rabbi do we want to produce?”²⁵ They divided the responses into three areas: knowledge of the rabbi, professional skills of the rabbi, and general description of the rabbi. These responses, spanning four pages, represented an aspiration more than a list of requirements; however, they served to guide the 25 recommendations outlined in the report. Knowledge of the rabbi included Jewish history and thought, a broad but detailed knowledge of religious practice, resourcefulness in using tools to study, an area of special expertise, and more.²⁶ Professional skills included, among pastoral, teaching, and interpersonal skills, “an acquisition of genuine self-knowledge during rabbinic school.”²⁷ The general description included characteristics such as patience, humor, integrity, personal study practice, confidence, and so on.²⁸ The length and variety of these aspirations emphasize many competing tensions, as well as the near-impossibility of attaining every ideal during a five-year course of study.

In the introduction to the report, The Task Force wrote, “Our aim is not to train individuals who are experts in all areas – an unattainable goal. Our aim is to educate devoted rabbis who can effectively draw insights from a variety of disciplines and integrate them with

²³Mihaly et. al., “Report of the Task Force,” 1-2.

²⁴While there had certainly been curricular revisions and innovations, notably with the JIR merger and under Nelson Glueck’s presidency, there had been no formal curriculum review of this nature led by a presidential-appointed task force. Michael A. Meyer, *Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion: A Centennial History, 1875-1975* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1976), 221-222.

²⁵Mihaly et. al., “Report of the Task Force,” 8.

²⁶Mihaly et. al., 8-9.

²⁷Mihaly et. al., 9-10.

²⁸Mihaly et. al., 10-11.

what they learned in their academic course of study and personal experience.”²⁹ Indeed, they later reiterated in the section titled “Areas of Concern,” “There is a widespread feeling of fragmentation: students possess many threads which have not been adequately woven into a sustaining fabric.”³⁰ However, the Task Force did not offer any substantive solutions to this problem of lack of integration, despite alumni and student feedback to the report.³¹ In his letter to Dr. Mihaly, lay leader Mace H. Levin summarized succinctly: “I would only comment that much of what is frequently referred to as Practical Rabbinics can and should be interwoven into all courses.”³²

However, while the Task Force viewed this point as a problem of bifurcation of academic and professional, this lack of integration is threefold: academic, professional, and spiritual.³³ The lack of room for spiritual development within the rabbinic curriculum is emphasized throughout the report, as well as from constituent feedback.³⁴ Rabbi Joshua Saltzman jokes about his seminary experience at the time of the curriculum review, “When I first came to [HUC-JIR] in New York as a rabbinic student, I was repeatedly warned by a variety of individuals that if I were looking for spirituality – look elsewhere!”³⁵ Dr. Ora Horn Prouser, Executive Vice President and Academic Dean at the Academy for Jewish Religion, argues, “One characteristic that distinguishes MA or PhD graduate courses from rabbinical school courses is the importance of the spiritual and professional elements in rabbinic

²⁹Mihaly et. al., 14.

³⁰Mihaly et. al., 46.

³¹“Meeting with second-year students.” Roy A. Walter to Eugene Mihaly, 19 June 1988, HUC-JIR Records, MS-20/Box J6-5, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.

³²Mace H. Levin to Eugene Mihaly, December 1986, HUC-JIR Records, MS-20/Box J6-5, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.

³³Mihaly et. al., “Report of the Task Force,” 14.

³⁴“Meeting with second-year students.” Walter to Mihaly. Mihaly et. al., “Report of the Task Force,” 51.

³⁵Joshua Saltzman, “Talmud Torah and Spirituality: A Postmodern Perspective,” in *Paths of Faithfulness: Personal Essays on Jewish Spirituality*, ed. Carol Ochs, Kerry M. Olitzky, and Joshua Saltzman (Hoboken: KTAV Publishing House, 1997) 149-150.

education.”³⁶ Yet, the Task Force explicitly argued in the introduction that this is not the aim of the College:

“Others have argued... that the College-Institute could and should take a more active role in the spiritual development of its students... For the College-Institute to provide this kind of spiritual guidance in any programmatic way, the administration and faculty would have to see the college pre-eminently as a seminary, a school for cultivating the religious growth of the rabbi. The spiritual dimension, nebulous as it is, would consequently have to inform every aspect of our program – the academic as well as the professional. Such a goal is in tension with our historic commitment... It is possible that an emphasis on developing spirituality would compromise our objectivity and our dedication to ‘free inquiry.’”³⁷

While the Task Force went on to encourage an approach to spirituality that lives in the tension described, they did not adequately return to spiritual development within the curricular recommendations. Rabbi Kenneth D. Roseman refuted these points in the report:

“There is what I consider a false dichotomy between rigorous and free academic inquiry into the Jewish past and present and personal spiritual growth. It seems to me that the goal of the college in its Rabbinic [program] ought to be, first, that kind of untrammelled inquiry and second, the mandate that every student confront the results of that inquiry and develop a personal faith system... The student must also be able to express his or her personal connection to those same items. Has the student had any personal experience of God? Is prayer a living reality to the student, or will he/she be condemned to a life of hypocrisy, leading prayers from the pulpit which do not individually or collectively speak to the student or to the recent graduate?”³⁸

These issues of spiritual development persist today, and perhaps with the elimination of a previously required pre-M.A. course in theology, the tensions are even more pronounced within the curriculum.³⁹

³⁶Ora Horn Prouser, “Rabbinic Education: More than an Academic Exercise,” in *Keeping Faith in Rabbis: A Community Conversation on Rabbinical Education*, ed. Hayim Herring and Ellie Roscher (Avenida Books, 2014), 212.

³⁷Mihaly et. al., “Report of the Task Force,” 14-16.

³⁸Kenneth D. Roseman to Eugene Mihaly, 21 June 1988, HUC-JIR Records, MS-20/Box J6-5, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio.

³⁹“2021-2022 Academic Catalog,” “Cincinnati Campus Checklist,” “Rabbinical Course of Study,” HUC-JIR, accessed May 8, 2023.

The Landscape Today

Attempts have been made in the past decade to address the concerns that the 1988 report brought to light. Most crucially, in the early 1990s, Rabbi Julie Schwartz founded the first ever Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) program to be affiliated with a rabbinic school.⁴⁰ Through the 2022 think tank and focus groups, many HUC-JIR alumni expressed that their experiences in CPE were of immense value. However, while CPE helped to bridge some of the gaps in their spirituality, alumni consistently expressed that they wished they had had more explicit opportunities for spiritual growth and development. In reality, it is inadequate to point towards CPE as the container for spiritual education for rabbis-in-information. The Association for Clinical Pastoral Education explains on its website:

“Clinical Pastoral Education is interfaith professional education for ministry. It brings theological students and ministers of all faiths (pastors, priests, rabbis, imams and others) into supervised encounter with persons in crisis. Out of an intense involvement with persons in need, and the feedback from peers and teachers, students develop new awareness of themselves as persons and of the needs of those to whom they minister. From theological reflection on specific human situations, they gain a new understanding of ministry. Within the interdisciplinary team process of helping persons, they develop skills in interpersonal and interprofessional relationships.... ACPE certified CPE develops the capacity for the pastoral and spiritual care of individuals, families, and systems.”⁴¹

The primary goal of CPE is to learn how to provide pastoral care for others. While participating in CPE certainly contributes to the spiritual growth and self-awareness of rabbis-in-information, this growth is articulated as a means towards the end of providing pastoral care. As an interfaith program, it also does not provide a particularly Jewish framework for spiritual formation.

⁴⁰As of the conclusion of the summer 2023 term, the CPE program has been removed from the Cincinnati campus. *Holy Sparks: Celebrating 50 Years of Women in the Rabbinate*, Skirball Museum, HUC-JIR, Cincinnati, Ohio, 19 May – 4 September 2022, 12.

⁴¹“CPE Students,” Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, accessed November 29, 2023, <https://acpe.edu/education/cpe-students>.

In an interview I conducted with Rabbi Cheryl Peretz, the Associate Dean of the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies, she was surprised when I brought up CPE within our conversation on formal spiritual education. Rabbi Peretz explained to me, “I think that CPE is amazing and one of the most self-reflective processes that students can undergo. But the extent to which it is a program in spiritual development depends on the student and what they define as spiritual.”⁴² As an inherently interpersonal program, it cannot help students cultivate all spiritual dispositions and modalities. Additionally, unless rabbis-in-formation opt to take more than one unit of CPE, it is a standalone experience limited to one summer or one academic year, without continued integration throughout the entirety of the rabbinic program. For all these reasons, one single unit of CPE falls short of being a stand-in for spiritual education.

More recently, the New York campus of HUC-JIR has been home to the Spirituality Initiative since 2011. The January 2019 Summative Evaluation of the Initiative explains, “Using a multi-faceted approach, the Initiative was designed to equip participants with practices, vocabulary and experiences to cultivate their personal and professional spiritual lives. The initiative also aims to integrate mindfulness and contemplative practices into the broader organizational culture of the campus.”⁴³ As of the publication of the report, 98 students had participated in spiritual direction.⁴⁴ Participants in the Spirituality Initiative received it overwhelmingly positively: 86% of respondents agreed that spiritual direction was an important part of their HUC-JIR experience, and 93% of respondents agreed that they

⁴²Rabbi Cheryl Peretz (Associate Dean, Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies), Zoom interview with author, October 6, 2023.

⁴³Tobin Belzer and Gila Silverman, “Spiritual Direction & Jewish Spiritual Director Training: Summative Evaluation,” (The Spirituality Initiative, HUC-JIR, January 2019), 1.

⁴⁴Belzer and Silverman, 1.

would have benefited from spiritual direction throughout their entire tenure at HUC-JIR.⁴⁵

However, students also expressed that spiritual direction felt disconnected from the rest of their seminary experience.⁴⁶ The Summative Evaluation offers fifteen recommendations for the Spirituality Initiative, including for faculty and alumni. The recommendations specifically addressed at students are as follows:

“Continue to provide multiple modalities to pursue spiritual development. Support students to allot sufficient time in their schedules for spiritual development. Develop strategies to more fully integrate spiritual development into the entire HUC experience. Develop the capacity to provide spiritual direction to all students who express interest throughout their time at HUC.”⁴⁷

Spiritual direction has remained inconsistently available to students across HUC-JIR’s three stateside campuses: students in Cincinnati only received access to spiritual direction for the first time once the school shifted to a virtual model for the 2020-2021 academic year.⁴⁸

Spiritual direction and other formal offerings for spiritual development similarly vary across the landscape of liberal rabbinic schools;⁴⁹ however, the majority of seminaries offer some form of formalized spiritual development to students. The Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies, housed at the American Jewish University in Los Angeles, California, was founded in 1996. The four-year program is affiliated with the Conservative Movement and has ordained more than 225 rabbis.⁵⁰ Ziegler requires that first-year students participate in their Eit Ratzon program, in which students engage in group spiritual work and identify personal places of spiritual development. Students then have the option of extending their work

⁴⁵Belzer and Silverman, 4, 9.

⁴⁶Belzer and Silverman, 9.

⁴⁷Belzer and Silverman, 22.

⁴⁸“HUC-CN Spiritual Direction Information Packet,” (HUC-JIR, June 6, 2020).

⁴⁹“Liberal rabbinic schools,” for the purposes of this study, are defined as egalitarian, non-Orthodox programs for rabbinic ordination.

⁵⁰“Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies,” American Jewish University, accessed October 4, 2023, <https://www.aju.edu/ziegler-school-rabbinic-studies>.

individually beyond the first year.⁵¹ The Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS), the Conservative Movement's premier rabbinical school in New York City, pairs each student with a spiritual mentor, with whom they meet individually or in small groups. The JTS website cites CPE as a key spiritual experience, alongside daily communal prayer.⁵²

The Reconstructionist Rabbinical College (RRC) in Philadelphia was founded in 1968 to serve the Reconstructionist movement (now Reconstructing Judaism). RRC's program is structured similarly to many medical school models, divided roughly into preclinical study and clinical fieldwork. Rabbinic students spend their first three years in residency in Philadelphia, travel to Israel in the summer of their third year, and then spend their final two years placed in the field for intensive internship experiences while simultaneously continuing their education online.⁵³ They return to RRC's Philadelphia campus twice a year for required retreats. Students at RRC are encouraged to participate in spiritual direction; close to 75% of rabbinic students opt into the program.⁵⁴

Although Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi had been awarding private *smicha*, rabbinic ordination, to individual students beginning in 1974 and later ordained rabbis through the B'nai Or/P'nai Or Rabbinic Fellowship, the ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal Ordination Program (AOP) was only formally established in 2002.⁵⁵ Today, there are more than 200 rabbis who have been ordained by Reb Zalman, B'nai Or/P'nai Or, and

⁵¹Peretz, October 6, 2023.

⁵²"Spiritual Mentoring," The Jewish Theological Seminary, accessed December 4, 2023, <https://www.jtsa.edu/spiritual-mentoring/>.

⁵³"Curriculum Overview," Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, Reconstructing Judaism, accessed October 12, 2023, <https://rrc.edu/curriculum-overview/>.

⁵⁴"Spiritual Direction," RRC, Reconstructing Judaism, accessed October 12, 2023, <https://rrc.edu/spiritual-direction/>. Rabbi Shawn Zevit (Director of Hashpa'ah: Training Program for Jewish Spiritual Directors at ALEPH), Zoom interview with author, October 5, 2023.

⁵⁵Simcha Raphael et al., "History of the ALEPH Ordination Program," ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal, accessed November 6, 2023, <https://aleph.org/aop/history-of-the-aleph-ordination-program/>.

AOP affiliated with the Jewish Renewal movement.⁵⁶ AOP is the least traditional among the seminaries described, as it is an entirely low-residency program, with several weeks of required intensive retreats each year.⁵⁷ At the same time, AOP is the only rabbinical program to require ongoing spiritual direction, “from the time a student enters the program until six months after ordination.”⁵⁸

The most robust spiritual formation programming is offered by Hebrew College. The pluralist rabbinical school, founded in 1921 in Boston, defines itself as “a vibrant Jewish educational institution dedicated to promoting deep Jewish learning and inspired leadership within a pluralistic environment of open inquiry, intellectual rigor, personal engagement, and spiritual creativity.”⁵⁹ Following a core curriculum centered around the *beit midrash*⁶⁰, rabbinic students choose a specialization track during their final years prior to ordination: specializations include *halakha*, *hasidut*, *kabbalah*,⁶¹ pastoral care, and Spirituality and Social Justice Leadership.⁶² The Hebrew College website details this specialization:

“We live in a world that is deeply in need of Jewish clergy and leaders who can identify and address pressing issues and injustices and organize and inspire individuals and communities to bring forth transformative change. At the Rabbinical School of Hebrew College, our commitment to the inner life is coupled with a deep and passionate sense of communal responsibility. This specialization weaving together coursework, internships, retreats and mentorship – [sic] prepares students to bring Jewish wisdom to bear on the most pressing issues of our time, and develop the capacity to effect change through communal action. The program also recognizes and emphasizes the critical role of spiritual growth and support for effective and enduring social justice work.”⁶³

⁵⁶Raphael et al.

⁵⁷“Our Approach,” AOP, ALEPH, accessed November 6, 2023, <https://aleph.org/aop/our-approach/>.

⁵⁸ALEPH Ordination Program: The Seminary for the Renewal of Judaism, “Course Catalog, Academic Year 2023-2024” (ALEPH, October 2023), 16.

⁵⁹Sharon Cohen Anisfeld et al, “What is Ours To Do?: Hebrew College Strategic Plan 2018-2021” (Hebrew College, updated November 5, 2020), 5.

⁶⁰Literally “house of study;” dedicated learning space to study Jewish sacred texts in *chevrotah*, or pairs.

⁶¹Literally “the way,” Jewish law; study of mystical Hasidic texts; esoteric Jewish mysticism.

⁶²“Curriculum: Become a Rabbi,” Hebrew College, accessed October 16, 2023, <https://hebrewcollege.edu/graduate-leadership-programs/become-a-rabbi/curriculum/>.

⁶³“Curriculum: Becoming a Rabbi.”

In addition to the Spirituality and Social Justice Leadership specialization, Hebrew College seeks to expand spiritual development to all rabbinic students throughout their time in seminary.

In recognition of this potential, The Covenant Foundation awarded a 2022 Signature Grant to Hebrew College.⁶⁴ The Covenant Foundation, a project of Crown Family Philanthropies, “seeks out innovation and excellence in the field of Jewish education” and has awarded an average of \$1.7 million per year since its founding in 1991.⁶⁵ The Signature Grant is Covenant’s most prestigious offering, a multi-year grant for programs poised at the cutting edge of Jewish education. Previous projects that have received Signature Grants include “A New Model for Family B’nai Mitzvah Education” from Moving Traditions in 2017, “Project Zug” from Hadar Institute in 2016, “StorahLAB” from StorahTelling in 2005, and “Mainstream: The Mikveh Outreach Initiative” from Mayyim Hayyim: Living Waters Community Mikveh and Education Center in 2007.⁶⁶ Indeed, the Covenant Foundation has seeded initiatives that have gone on to fundamentally change the Jewish world. By awarding Hebrew College a Signature Grant for spiritual formation in rabbinic education, Covenant is signaling both the promise and the importance of such a project.

According to a Hebrew College blog, the \$150,000, three-year grant will be used to expand their spiritual offerings, such as “faculty pedagogical development (including the creation of a course on Spiritual Life in the Rabbinate), *beit midrash chevrutah* learning, *chevraya* spiritual formation groups & retreats, the creation of a student mentor-sharing

⁶⁴“The Covenant Grants: Spiritual Formation in Rabbinic Education,” The Covenant Foundation, January 5, 2023, <https://covenantfn.org/grant/spiritual-formation-in-rabbinic-education-2/>.

⁶⁵Esther D. Kustanowitz, “Forging connections drives Covenant’s new exec,” *eJewishPhilanthropy*, January 26, 2022, <https://ejewishphilanthropy.com/forging-connections-drives-covenants-new-exec/>.

⁶⁶“The Covenant Grants,” The Covenant Foundation, accessed October 16, 2023, <https://covenantfn.org/grants/listing/>.

program, and the development of tools to better assess student spiritual growth.”⁶⁷ Rabbi Daniel Klein, Hebrew College’s Dean of Students, says of the grant, “It is an extraordinary honor... because they are funding us for spiritual formation work, which is one of the distinctive features of our approach to rabbinic education. Their support is an affirmation of the critical importance of rabbinic education and our distinctive approach to it.”⁶⁸ At the time of writing, Hebrew College has not yet completed the first year of the grant, and the outcomes of their work are still forthcoming.

Without consistent opportunities to lay firm spiritual groundwork while in seminary, rabbis are seeking out spiritual development after ordination. The Institute for Jewish Spirituality has largely filled the void for the past 25 years, with over 530 clergy participating in their immersive programs.⁶⁹ Founded in 1999, IJS offers a variety of synchronous and asynchronous online courses, as well as cohort-based leadership programs and intensive retreats. The IJS articulates, “The Institute for Jewish Spirituality envisions a world in which spiritual practice is a vital part of Jewish life, leading to compassion, justice, and peace... [IJS]’s mission is to develop and teach Jewish spiritual practices so that individuals and communities may experience greater awareness, purpose, and interconnection.”⁷⁰ IJS identifies five core Jewish spiritual practices: mindfulness meditation, *tikkun middot*,⁷¹ contemplative text study, embodied practices, and *t’filah*.⁷² IJS’s offerings are critical, with

⁶⁷“Hebrew College Receives \$150,000 Covenant Grant to Foster Spiritual Leadership,” *Hebrew College Community Blog*, January 17, 2023, <https://hebrewcollege.edu/blog/hebrew-college-receives-150000-covenant-grant-to-foster-spiritual-leadership/>.

⁶⁸“Hebrew College Receives \$150,000 Covenant Grant to Foster Spiritual Leadership.”

⁶⁹“IJS Impact Report 2023,” Institute for Jewish Spirituality, October 24, 2023, <https://www.jewishspirituality.org/about/impact-report-2023/>, 3.

⁷⁰“Our Mission, Vision, and Values,” IJS, accessed September 15, 2023, <https://www.jewishspirituality.org/about/our-vision-mission-and-values/>.

⁷¹Cultivating character traits and inner qualities, often through the lens of Mussar, Jewish ethical discipline.

⁷²“What Are Jewish Spiritual Practices?” IJS, accessed September 15, 2023, <https://www.jewishspirituality.org/about/what-are-jewish-spiritual-practices/>.

many rabbis stating that their engagement with IJS is the most impactful part of their rabbinate, and even that IJS helped to save and revitalize their rabbinate.⁷³

Other programs continue to emerge to address this spiritual vacuum that rabbis and Jews of all kinds face. The Jewish Studio Project was founded in 2015 by Rabbi Adina Allen based on the premise that “Creativity is inherent within all of us, yet we live in a society in which most of us are cut off from this essential part of who we are. This is a crisis of spirit and imagination. Jewish Studio Project (JSP) exists to address this profound need.”⁷⁴ When I asked Rabbi Allen who the average person is that participates in JSP’s offerings, she shared that they are people who feel a bifurcated between their “art self” and their “Jewish self,” and have never felt that the two parts were connected.⁷⁵ As they expand their offerings, JSP launched their inaugural cohort of the JSP Clergy Studio in 2023. The webpage for the 10-month fellowship advertises to potential clergy participants: “Reawaken your sense of spiritual connection and hone your prophetic voice.”⁷⁶ And it is not only formal continuing education for clergy that is coming to fill this void. In his rabbinic thesis, “Spin, Sweat, and Shakharit?: Where the Spirituality of America’s Health and Wellness Culture Meets Judaism,” Rabbi Sammy Kanter explores how boutique fitness studios satisfy spiritual and communal needs that have traditionally been fulfilled by houses of worship. Rabbi Kanter interviewed one rabbi who “trained to become a CrossFit coach after six years in the rabbinate to fulfill parts of himself that were not being fulfilled by his work as a pulpit

⁷³Rabbi Josh Feigelson (CEO, Institute for Jewish Spirituality), phone interview with author, September 20, 2023. Anonymous, 2022.

⁷⁴“Our Work,” Jewish Studio Project, accessed October 15, 2023, <https://www.jewishstudioproject.org/our-work>.

⁷⁵Rabbi Adina Allen (Co-Founder and Creative Director, Jewish Studio Project), Zoom interview with author, October 13, 2023.

⁷⁶“Clergy Studio,” JSP, accessed October 15, 2023, <https://www.jewishstudioproject.org/clergy-studio>.

rabbi,” citing the structure and ritual elements of the workout that enables a spiritual experience.⁷⁷

This lack of spiritual fulfillment among rabbis is an increasingly common story. In a conversation with CEO of IJS Rabbi Josh Feigelson, he explained a scenario he sees frequently among clergy who participate in IJS programming: “They’re feeling burnt out, exhausted by the performativity, and they didn’t receive spiritual formation tools in seminary. That catches up with them, and by midlife, they’re asking themselves, what am I doing this for? And they wind up coming to us.”⁷⁸ While IJS is a vital resource for clergy in the field, it cannot replace spiritual formation within the context of seminary. Piecemeal individual responses to spiritual crises, whether through CrossFit or IJS or other programs, are insufficient to address this systemic problem. Spiritual formation must be integrated into the rabbinic curriculum, equipping rabbis-in-formation with tools and practices that can ground their spirituality as they launch into the rabbinate.

⁷⁷Kanter, “Spin, Sweat, and Shakharit?”, 40-41.

⁷⁸Rabbi Josh Feigelson, phone interview with author, September 20, 2023.

Chapter Two: The Case for a Spiritual Curriculum

Demonstrated Need

The Institute for Jewish Spirituality's 2022-2025 Strategic Plan¹ outlines worrying trends in "emotional and social health," trends that are particularly stark among young people and American Jews.² Prevalence of mental health crises combined with feelings of disconnection leads to a report that "young American Jews feel they are 'not flourishing' at the highest rate of any religious group."³ In his article "The Mental Health Continuum: From Languishing to Flourishing in Life," Corey L. M. Keyes defines flourishing as "to be filled with positive emotion and to be functioning well psychologically and socially."⁴ If young Jews are not flourishing, more so than any other religious group of the same age demographic, there is undeniably cause for concern. IJS proposes that the solution to this crisis is spirituality. The Strategic Plan proclaims, "We've been overlooking spirituality, but it has been here all along. It's time to take it seriously."⁵ Spirituality is full of untapped potential in solving the problems facing Jews and Jewish institutions today, and we must direct our efforts towards the spiritual development of those served by Jewish institutions.

Rabbis themselves must be equipped with the tools to cultivate their own spiritual lives to then help others access spirituality. In their announcement of the 2022 Signature

¹Two texts on the title page set the tone for the document: "And they shall make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell within them" (Exodus 25:8), and "It is not written 'within it,' but rather, 'within them'" (Rabbi Menachem Nachum of Chernobyl, Me'or Eynaim, 18th c.).

²"IJS Strategic Plan 2022-2025," Institute for Jewish Spirituality, accessed September 21, 2023, <https://www.jewishspirituality.org/about/ijs-strategic-plan-2022-2025/>, 3.

³"IJS Strategic Plan 2022-2025," 3.

⁴Corey L. M. Keyes, "The Mental Health Continuum: From Languishing to Flourishing in Life" (*Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, vol. 43, no. 2, 2002), <https://doi.org/10.2307/3090197>, 210.

⁵"IJS Strategic Plan 2022-2025," 4.

Grant to Hebrew College, the Covenant Foundation underscores the importance of rabbinic spiritual formation:

“This is a time of extraordinary transition. One of the critical responsibilities of rabbis, and clergy in general, is to walk with people in tumultuous times and help us experience these transitions as thresholds, not precipices. For rabbis to be loving guides and companions, they must have the habits of heart and mind to sense the sacred in and through their interactions with Jewish texts, rituals, and customs as well as the people they serve. Through this spiritual attunement, rabbis will be more able to care for the people they serve and help draw them more deeply into life-sustaining engagement with Jewish tradition.”⁶

Indeed, if rabbis want to adequately address the crises facing their communities by any means at all, spirituality is a necessity. Spiritual burnout is known to be rising among members of the clergy across all religions, and it is increasingly being noticed among the rabbinate.⁷ Co-director of the Hebrew College Signature Grant Rabbi Daniel Klein alleges that spiritual burnout is a cause of an “exodus from rabbinic work.”⁸ He argues, “While the acquisition of Judaic knowledge and professional skills, which traditionally have been the primary focus of rabbinic education, are critical, they are insufficient to prepare students for effective and enduring lives in the rabbinate... The spiritual resources required [for] essential rabbinic work... can only be present if rabbis learn to cultivate their own inner lives.”⁹ It is critical that rabbis put on their own metaphorical oxygen masks before they can help others facing the same desperate need.

⁶“The Covenant Grants: Spiritual Formation in Rabbinic Education,” The Covenant Foundation, January 5, 2023, <https://covenantfn.org/grant/spiritual-formation-in-rabbinic-education-2/>.

⁷Glen Milstein, Celia F. Hybels, and Rae Jean Proeschold-Bell, “A prospective study of clergy spiritual well-being, depressive symptoms, and occupational distress” (*Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* 12 no.4 2019), 409-416.

⁸“Hebrew College Receives \$150,000 Covenant Grant to Foster Spiritual Leadership,” *Hebrew College Community Blog*, January 17, 2023, <https://hebrewcollege.edu/blog/hebrew-college-receives-150000-covenant-grant-to-foster-spiritual-leadership/>.

⁹“Hebrew College Receives \$150,000 Covenant Grant to Foster Spiritual Leadership.”

Towards Integration

In their book *SQ: Connecting with Our Spiritual Intelligence*, Danah Zohar and Ian Marshall propose that while being spiritually healthy means to be whole and centered, “spiritual illness is a condition of being fragmented.”¹⁰ Fragmentation describes the “disconnected,” “bifurcated,” “dissonant” spiritual lives that rabbis-in-information feel at HUC-JIR today.¹¹ Rabbi Josh Feigelson, too, used the term “fragmented” in a conversation on this spiritual crisis: “Our souls are fragmented and splintered all over. The purpose of Torah and *t’filah* is to help us center ourselves. [As God says about the building of the Tabernacle,] ‘Make me a sanctuary so I may dwell,’¹² not *in* it, but among them – in their hearts.”¹³ To bring rabbis and rabbis-in-information towards this center, they must be given the tools for integration.

Integration is the ideal state of spiritual wellbeing. In many ways it is also our natural state. Fragmentation implies that what was once whole has been artificially, perhaps even violently, split. Rabbi Shawn Zevit, Director of Hashpa’ah: Training Program for Jewish Spiritual Directors at ALEPH, emphasized that Judaism understands the human being to be fully integrated. He explained, “We are *nefesh* and *guf*, we are fully ensouled beings. The Torah gives us that stance – we are whole in form beings – and the rest is commentary.”¹⁴ Rabbi Zevit further conveyed that spiritual formation must deal not only with a fully

¹⁰Danah Zohar and Ian Marshall, *SQ: Connecting with Our Spiritual Intelligence* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2000), 185.

¹¹Tobin Belzer and Gila Silverman, “Spiritual Direction & Jewish Spiritual Director Training: Summative Evaluation,” (The Spirituality Initiative, HUC-JIR, January 2019), 9. Various interviews with author, 2022-2024.

¹²Exodus 25:8.

¹³Rabbi Josh Feigelson (CEO, Institute for Jewish Spirituality), phone interview with author, September 20, 2023.

¹⁴Rabbi Shawn Zevit (Director of Hashpa’ah: Training Program for Jewish Spiritual Directors at ALEPH), Zoom interview with author, October 5, 2023.

integrated self, but a self that is fully integrated with the rest of the world: “We must understand our role in the cosmos and the planet. If Jewish spiritual formation didn’t start from that vantage point, we would have to be compartmentalized, disassociated from Torah, fragmented. I wouldn’t call that spirituality.”¹⁵ A person who has a developed spiritual life is able to integrate all parts of themselves, but crucially, they do not remain inwardly focused. Authentic spirituality requires a self-integrated person moving beyond themselves and integrating into their community, their context, and their place in the world.

This premise is the foundation of Rabbi Jesse Paikin’s spiritually integrated approach to education, titled “*L’shem Yichud: A Pedagogy For the Sake of Integration*.” He proclaims, “This pedagogy... is based on a simple yet profound idea: **our immediate human actions—including learning—have a significance that resonates far beyond the self and the immediate moment of acquisition or performance.**”¹⁶ This idea is encapsulated in the very word *l’shem*, meaning ‘for the sake of....’ inviting us to ask: *what is our learning for the sake of beyond this immediate moment?*”¹⁷ There is a robust tradition of Torah *lishmah*, studying for its own sake, but spiritual development must not be for its own sake alone. Jewish spiritual formation cannot be selfish by definition: true spiritual formation is an integrated spirituality that moves beyond the self.

Rabbi Nancy Wiener describes spiritual formation as “the process of becoming.”¹⁸ She argues that integrating our full, complex selves is the path towards spiritual authenticity, because integration of complexity reflects the image of God. Rabbi Wiener translates God’s

¹⁵Rabbi Shawn Zevit, Zoom interview with author, October 5, 2023.

¹⁶Emphasis reproduced from original text.

¹⁷Jesse Paikin, “*L’shem Yichud: A Pedagogy For the Sake of Integration*,” M², January 25, 2023, <https://ieje.org/resources/lshem-yichud-a-pedagogy-for-the-sake-of-integration/>, 4-6.

¹⁸Nancy Wiener, “*Hineni – Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh*,” in *Paths of Faithfulness: Personal Essays on Jewish Spirituality*, ed. Carol Ochs, Kerry M. Olitzky, and Joshua Saltzman (Hoboken: KTAV Publishing House, 1997), 159.

name in Exodus 3:14, אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה: “I am what I am; I am what I will become; I will be what I will be... In God’s likeness, we, too, can accurately describe ourselves with the same words. We are ever in a state of becoming.”¹⁹ If the Eternal God is always becoming, the process of becoming is a truly lifelong endeavor. Integrating our entire selves and then integrating that self into the world is a continuous process of becoming. Spiritual formation will never be completed in the context of rabbinic formation; however, neither are we permitted to cease from becoming.²⁰ It is in spiritual integration, the always becoming, that the spiritual curriculum for rabbis-in-formation begins.

The Rabbi-in-Formation as the Human-in-Formation

Spiritual development for the rabbi-in-formation can be apprehended through the first line of the V’ahavta: “וְאָהַבְתָּ אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל-מְאֹדְךָ”²¹ The majority of contemporary English translations render this verse along the lines of the JPS translation: “You shall love the ETERNAL your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”²² Heart, soul, and might are the commonly accepted translations of the three means – interpreted to mean with all of yourself and in every way – through which one is commanded to love God in this passage.²³

However, through the lens of spiritual development, I prefer Everett Fox’s translation and accompanying explanation: “So you are to love YHWH your God with all your heart,

¹⁹Wiener, “Hineni – Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh,” in *Paths of Faithfulness*, 158-159.

²⁰“Rabbi Tarfon used to say: it is not incumbent upon you to finish the task, but neither are you free to desist from it.” Pirkei Avot 2:16

²¹Deuteronomy 6:5.

²²*The JPS Tanakh: Gender-Sensitive Edition*, ed. David E. S. Stein (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2023).

²³Some translations render וּבְכָל-מְאֹדְךָ as “and with all your possessions,” referring to material wealth.

with all your being, with all your substance!”²⁴ In his translation notes, Fox explains that though he has maintained the traditional translation of “heart,” the word itself refers to the mind in the Biblical world; later on in the rabbinic imagination, they conceived of the heart as the seat of wisdom.²⁵ By “substance,” Fox means “strength” or “capacity,” referring to physicality.²⁶ The most striking translation choice is to render וְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ as “with all your being.” Fox writes:

“[The Hebrew word נַפֶּשׁ] carries a host of meanings: ‘life’ or ‘life-essence,’ ‘breath,’ ‘self,’ and ‘appetite,’ to mention a few. The traditional English ‘soul,’ while stirring in these passages, gives the impression of something contrasted to the body—not an idea that appears in the Hebrew Bible.”²⁷

The נַפֶּשׁ, then, is the entirety of oneself. It is all that one is, and cannot be separated from the intellect or the physical form.

Much of the tension around spiritual development within the seminary landscape today can be summarized by this translation choice. The three parts, the לֵב, the נַפֶּשׁ, and the מְאֵד have been artificially bifurcated. We can overlay these three parts onto the elements of rabbinic formation as it is today: לֵב is academic, נַפֶּשׁ is spiritual, and מְאֵד is professional. These elements are viewed in conflict with one another; they cannot all be cultivated at the same time. Consider how the Task Force addressed the question of spirituality: “The spiritual dimension, nebulous as it is, would consequently have to inform every aspect of our program – the academic as well as the professional. Such a goal is in tension with our historic commitment... It is possible that an emphasis on developing spirituality would compromise

²⁴Everett Fox, *The Five Books of Moses* (New York: Schocken Books, 1995 accessed February 19, 2024), https://www.sefaria.org/The_Five_Books_of_Moses_by_Everett_Fox.

²⁵Fox, *The Five Books of Moses*.

²⁶Fox, *The Five Books of Moses*.

²⁷Fox, *The Five Books of Moses*.

our objectivity and our dedication to ‘free inquiry.’”²⁸ We might instead interpret, “The נִפְּשׁ, nebulous as it is, would consequently have to inform every aspect of our program – the לֵב as well as the מֵאֵד.”

The rabbi-in-formation is first and foremost a human-in-formation. Just as the לֵב, the נִפְּשׁ, and the מֵאֵד are inextricably intertwined in the human being, the same must necessarily be true for the rabbi that is also a human. We cannot splice any one of these three in the human; to address one is to necessarily address them all. The same must be true in rabbinic formation. A spiritual curriculum, a curriculum for the נִפְּשׁ, has the power to make whole the disparate elements of rabbinic formation.

Rabbi Wiener offers an alluring charge for the human-in-formation: “We have the capacity to express our whole beings and to encourage others to do the same. To be present in the moment... is to bring one’s whole self in its current state of becoming. To live in the moment, with a sense of connection to the past and the future, to let the self that we are express itself with integrity and wholeness, is to let our authentic selves be and become.”²⁹ Empowering rabbis-in-formation to be and become authentically might unleash cascading ripple effects in the Jewish world and the lives of the people they serve. Towards this ultimate goal, we can start by inviting the rabbi-in-formation to bring their whole entire selves to their own process of becoming.

²⁸Eugene Mihaly, Norman J. Cohen, William Cutter, and Barry S. Kogan, “Innovators of Torah: Preparing Tomorrow’s Rabbis for Reform Judaism, Report of the Task Force on the Rabbinic Curriculum of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion,” October 1988, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion Records, MS-20/Box J6-6, AJA, Cincinnati, Ohio, 14-16.

²⁹Wiener, “*Hineni – Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh*,” in *Paths of Faithfulness*, 162.

Chapter Three:
וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ With All Your Being:
A Spiritual Curriculum for Rabbis-in-Formation

Introduction

Spiritual formation is a lifelong endeavor. While it is vital to catalyze and nurture spiritual growth within the seminary, the spiritual curriculum cannot result in a fully-formed spirituality upon ordination. It instead begins with the assumption that all rabbis-in-formation are indeed humans-in-formation, and that growth and change are a natural and necessary part of the human experience. Rabbis-in-formation currently have scant opportunities to cultivate spiritual growth within rabbinic school, taking detours from the curriculum map to complete a unit of CPE or take a one-off class on a topic that touches on spiritual practice. The official path of spiritual formation within the curriculum is disjointed and difficult to navigate; it is so short that even the most highly motivated rabbis-in-formation find that they cannot travel very far with the tools they have been provided.

Rabbis-in-formation must be able to travel a longer path during their time in seminary through the introduction of a formal spiritual curriculum. This spiritual curriculum can follow the metaphor of the long short path. The story of the long short path is recorded in the Talmud in Eruvin 53b. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Hananya recounts this story:

“One time I was walking along the path, and I saw a young boy sitting at the crossroads. And I said to him, ‘On which path shall we walk in order to get to the city?’ He said to me, ‘This path is short and long, and that path is long and short.’ I walked on the path that was short and long. When I approached the city, I found that gardens and orchards surrounded it, and I did not know the trails leading through them to the city. I went back and met the young boy again and said to him, ‘My son, didn’t you tell me that this way is short?’ He said to me, ‘And didn’t I tell you that it is also long?’ I kissed him on his head and said to him, ‘Happy are you, O Israel, for you are all exceedingly wise, from your old to your young.’”¹

¹Talmud Bavli, Eruvin 53b.

These two paths, the short long path and the long short path, serve as a helpful paradigm for learning. The short long path might manifest as taking it easy all semester but cramming all night before the final exam; the long short path might be slow and steady, studying diligently and consistently and arriving at the final exam with ease. As a student on the first day of a summer beit midrash² program, I listened as the rosh yeshiva³ laid out these two paths before us, advising that the summer could either be short and long or long and short, depending on how we approached our time together. We could daydream through our Talmud blocks and look forward only to special programs and Shabbat, taking the short path that would result in a long and dragging summer, or we could apply ourselves to each translation and time in chevrutah, working diligently and taking the long path. At the end, we would look back on the summer, and realize how very short it was.

Chanie Chein, a Jewish Pedagogies and Research Fellow at M², argues that the long short path is the ideal roadmap for an educational journey.⁴ In her work with college students at critical junctures of identity formation, she noticed that many young people were forgoing personal reflection and “outsourcing” their decisions to other authorities. Chein proposes a pedagogy based on the long short path to help students reclaim their decisions through reflection. She argues, “Making choices based on your own internal world requires looking inward, discovering patterns in our life experiences, and delving into their meaning. This is not a short path. Developing the ability to reflect and articulate is a lengthy journey. Yet finding one’s own voice and language in this process provides us with agency and

²Literally “house of study;” dedicated learning space to study Jewish sacred texts in chevrutah, or pairs.

³Rabbinic dean of the yeshiva.

⁴Chanie Chein, “Insourcing, Reflection, and the ‘Long, Short Path,’” M², January 25, 2023, <https://ieje.org/resources/insourcing-reflection-and-the-long-short-path/>, 3.

vibrancy.”⁵ The short long path appears easier at first, but moments of crisis reveal that the hard work has only been deferred. The long short path, asking key questions long before answers are necessary, is one of empowerment.

This curriculum is a trail guide to help rabbis-in-formation travel the long short path.⁶ It invites them to pause and reflect, and to make reflection a habit. It encourages detours and experimentation. Ultimately, this curriculum sees that the long short path stretches out far beyond ordination, and it will aid rabbis-in-formation wherever they journey next.

The Three Pillars

The liturgy of the Torah service retains a rabbinic mission statement recorded in Pirkei Avot 1:2: “Shimon the Righteous was among the last of the Great Assembly. He used to say, ‘The world stands upon three things: on the Torah, on worship, and on acts of lovingkindness.’”⁷ The number three looms large in the rabbinic imagination; just as the triangle is the strongest shape, three principles allowed the rabbis to establish their authority on a stable foundation. This curriculum follows this model of three fundamental elements to lay the groundwork for spiritual development.⁸

The curriculum is organized by three middot, disciplines or dispositions, which will be referred to as “the three pillars.” These pillars are by no means the only potential foundation for spiritual formation; indeed, even the rabbis within the first chapter of Pirkei

⁵Chein, 1-2.

⁶“Religions are ways of conceptualizing the entire universe of existence. Spiritual discourse is thus a particular way to live in the world – one that leads us to appreciate things that we would not be conscious of were we to limit ourselves to the way our secular culture describes reality. What makes religions unique is the way they order the world... Getting in touch with the Jewish map is the beginning of Jewish spirituality.” Lawrence A. Hoffman, *The Journey Home: Discovering the Deep Spiritual Wisdom of the Jewish Tradition* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), 14.

⁷Pirkei Avot 1:2.

⁸Gershom Scholem identifies three types of Jewish piety: the talmid chakham, the tzaddik, and the hasid. Gershom Scholem, “Three Types of Jewish Piety” in *Ariel* 32, (1973): 5-24.

Avot disagreed about which three things the world stands upon.⁹ These three particular middot have been selected for their breadth and depth, each one addressing an element of the entire person as outlined in Deuteronomy 6:5: לֵב heart, נֶפֶשׁ being, and מְאֹד substance.¹⁰ They form three strands that intertwine to provide a foundation for lifelong spiritual formation. The three pillars are שְׁלֵמוֹת wholeness; זְרִירוֹת zeal; and חֲזוֹן vision.

Shleimut

Shleimut שְׁלֵמוֹת comes from the root שלם, which refers to being complete, perfect, whole, and at peace.¹¹ The translation of Shleimut which this curriculum aims to capture is “wholeness.” It corresponds to וּבְכָל-נֶפֶשְׁךָ, which Everett Fox translates as “with all your being.”¹² The enduring understanding of the Shleimut pillar is: “Spirituality unites, infuses, and transcends the practical, academic, and pastoral elements of the rabbinate.”

Shleimut seeks to address the whole person. As Fox explains in his translation note, נֶפֶשׁ is traditionally translated as “soul,” although this rendering “gives the impression of something contrasted to the body—not an idea that appears in the Hebrew Bible.”¹³ The נֶפֶשׁ is inseparable from the לֵב heart (the mind in the ancient understanding of the intellect) and the מְאֹד substance or physical form.¹⁴ It is artificial, therefore, to attempt to isolate any one of

⁹The first chapter of Pirkei Avot is bookended by two competing foundations: the final mishnah of the chapter reads, “Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel used to say, ‘The world stands upon three things: on justice, on truth, and on peace’” (Pirkei Avot 1:18).

¹⁰Everett Fox, *The Five Books of Moses* (New York: Schocken Books, 1995 accessed February 19, 2024), https://www.sefaria.org/The_Five_Books_of_Moses_by_Everett_Fox.

¹¹Samuel Rolles Driver, Francis Brown, and Charles Augustus Briggs, s.v. “שָׁלֵם” in *The Brown, Driver, Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (accessed February 8, 2024), <https://www.sefaria.org/BDB>.

¹²Fox, *The Five Books of Moses*.

¹³Fox, *The Five Books of Moses*.

¹⁴Driver, Brown, and Briggs, s.v. “לֵב” in *The Brown, Driver, Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (accessed February 19, 2024), <https://www.sefaria.org/BDB>.

these elements entirely. The Shleimut pillar makes this explicit. This curricular strand emphasizes that the rabbi-in-formation is first and foremost a human-in-formation, a person whose heart, being, and substance are constantly informing each other, changing, and growing.

Just as the heart, being, and substance are integrated, Shleimut strives for integration among all elements of the curriculum, both within and without. Within the spiritual curriculum, the Shleimut pillar grounds spirituality in mindfulness and the everyday experience. It traces the individual path of each rabbi-in-formation, bookending the four-year curriculum to facilitate awareness of spiritual growth among students. In the context of the seminary as a whole, the Shleimut pillar asks the rabbi-in-formation to consider how all of their coursework and fieldwork contribute to their spiritual development. It asks big picture questions that cannot be answered through the spiritual curriculum alone: “Why am I becoming a rabbi? What is my relationship with and understanding of God? How does my spirituality impact and inform me?” The Shleimut pillar necessitates spiritual learning in all elements of rabbinic formation, as the questions that it asks cannot be answered in isolation.

Zerizut

Zerizut זְרִיזוּת is derived from זָרַז, a verb that means to be strong and vigorous, to be active and conscientious, to be zealous, to accelerate or catalyze, and so on.¹⁵ This curriculum focuses on the zeal and alacrity of Zerizut. It corresponds to וּבְכָל-מְאֹדָה, which Everett Fox translates as “with all your substance.”¹⁶ The enduring understanding of the Zerizut pillar is: “Spiritual formation is active, internally driven, and rooted in practice.”

¹⁵Marcus Jastrow, s.v. “זָרַז” in *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi and Midrashic Literature* (accessed February 19, 2024), <https://www.sefaria.org/Jastrow>.

¹⁶Fox, *The Five Books of Moses*.

The Zerizut strand of the curriculum is grounded in the idea that spirituality is neither an innate quality that a person either has as an inherent part of themselves or not; nor is it a state of being that can be flipped on and off like a light switch. Instead, spirituality is a muscle that must be exercised. A person who is beginning to form a workout routine might find the exercises on day one awkward, difficult, and requiring lots of exertion; those same exercises on day thirty may feel natural and require considerably less effort.¹⁷ The transformation takes place incrementally through consistent practice. Similarly, the words of the siddur might feel foreign in one's mouth to start, but flow more easily over time. A meditation practice that begins with endless stretches of fidgeting and boredom may over time come to be a cherished moment of stillness and quiet. God might feel particularly distant at first, but by actively looking for God and learning to give language to holy experiences, a seeker may have their eyes opened to the Divine in every aspect of their life.

In Exodus, when Moses reads the covenant to the people of Israel, they respond, “All that God has spoken וְנַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמָע, we will do and we will understand.”¹⁸ They must first take action and practice what God has commanded, and only through doing will they come to understanding.¹⁹ Zerizut is based on this idea that actions impact thoughts and emotions just as much as thoughts and emotions impact actions. Zerizut focuses on the physicality of the self, the מַאֲד, as it connects to the לֵב and the נַפֵּשׁ. This pillar is the tachlis²⁰ of the curriculum. Through Zerizut, rabbis-in-formation explore a wide variety of spiritual modalities, trying on

¹⁷Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe wrote, “There is no place for arrogance in הִתְלַמְּדוּת. If I do some action well, behold, I have not done anything to be proud of, because I am only practicing (מְתַלְמֵד)! And when I am practicing (מְתַלְמֵד), I recognize that the action was not done perfectly.” Translated by Loren Berman, accessed March 2, 2024, <https://www.sefaria.org/sheets/110807.67>.

¹⁸Exodus 24:7.

¹⁹See also R. S. Peters, “Moral Development and Moral Learning,” *The Monist* 58, no. 4 (1974): 541–67, accessed March 5, 2024, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27902386>.

²⁰Yiddish word referring to logistics.

and experimenting with different spiritual practices. It aims to encourage rabbis-in-formation to expand their preconceived notions of spiritual practice, both to introduce them to practices they may not have otherwise considered but that they might find fulfilling, and to broaden their knowledge of spirituality so that they can help guide those they lead through their rabbinate. The ultimate goal is not to fit students into a rigid, uniform practice, but rather to help facilitate each rabbi-in-formation curating their own personally fulfilling spiritual habits.²¹

Hazon

Hazon חֲזוֹן is the mostly simply translated word of the three pillars, meaning “vision,” either as in a dream or as in divine prophecy.²² As a principle of spirituality, Hazon is about reflection. It corresponds to כָּל-לִבְבְּךָ, which Everett Fox translates as “with all your heart.”²³ The enduring understanding of the Hazon pillar is: “Spiritual formation is a lifelong process of reflection and integration, and it is never finished.”

If Shleimut focuses on the whole rabbi-in-formation in the context of the seminary, or the “being” of the present moment, Hazon emphasizes casting an eye forward to the future trajectory of the rabbi-in-formation, the “becoming” that will be ongoing. This pillar underlines that the work of spiritual formation will not end upon ordination. Rather, these four intensive years lay the groundwork for a lifetime of formation and spiritual

²¹See “The Wheel of Spirituality,” originally developed by Corinne Ware based on the work of Urban T. Holmes, adapted by Rabbi Shohama Harris Wiener to reflect the Kabbalistic Four Worlds. Shohama Harris Wiener, “Spiritual Types: One Size Doesn’t Fit All,” in *Jewish Spiritual Direction: An Innovative Guide from Traditional and Contemporary Sources*, ed. Howard A. Addison and Barbara Eve Breitman (Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2006), 117.

²²Driver, Brown, and Briggs, s.v. “חֲזוֹן” in *The Brown, Driver, Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (accessed February 19, 2024), <https://www.sefaria.org/BDB>.

²³Fox, *The Five Books of Moses*.

development. The Hazon strand of the curriculum is focused on laying as firm a foundation as possible.

Hazon is predicated on the assumption that self-reflection is a vital component of growth. This curricular strand asks students to look back in order to look forward, critically examining one's learning in order to push it where it needs to grow. It asks rabbis-in-formation to identify their strengths and challenges as they relate to spiritual development. Setting personal spiritual goals are a key component of this pillar, tailoring the spiritual curriculum to each individual's unique spiritual needs and desires. The Hazon pillar aims to help rabbis-in-formation give language to their spirituality, articulating and naming spiritual emotions and experiences in order to better describe and understand it. Additionally, a critical element of the Hazon strand is the development of a "spiritual toolkit" of practices, texts, and personal reflections to ground and accompany rabbis-in-formation far beyond ordination.

The three pillars undergird the entirety of the spiritual curriculum. They are the lens through which every formal spiritual learning session takes place across the four years. While each year is anchored by one essential question from each pillar, the centrality of each pillar necessarily ebb and flow. Each yearly retreat is themed around one pillar, and required coursework emphasizes the three pillars at different times.²⁴ For instance, in year 2 of the curriculum, the required course THE 524 Hasidism addresses the Shleimut essential question "What is my relationship with and understanding of God?" and desired outcome "Rabbis-in-formation will be able to develop language for their understanding of God." Simultaneously, the year 2 co-curriculars emphasizes the Zerizut essential question, "How can I cultivate my

²⁴See "Curriculum Overview and Timeline" below for the essential questions, desired outcomes, and methodologies to be used each year.

own spiritual practice?” The seminar seeks to showcase a variety of spiritual modalities, while the spring retreat offers an opportunity for rabbis-in-formation to immerse themselves in these different practices.

The Path

The spiritual curriculum is a path that is both long and short, and that path is supported by the three pillars of Shleimut, Zerizut, and Hazon. The path itself, though, is broad enough to allow each rabbi-in-formation to chart a distinct course. While rabbis-in-formation must lay common groundwork as they set out on their spiritual learning, each individual must also be able to curate their own path. The spiritual curriculum begins with the assumption that spirituality cannot be prescribed, and that each person will ultimately cultivate an entirely unique spiritual life and practice.²⁵ There are many paths towards spiritual formation and boundless methods and modalities for spiritual practice. This curriculum seeks not to limit, but to expand.

This approach of learning tailored to the individual learner has been affirmed and upheld in Jewish tradition as early as the Mishnah. Pirkei Avot 6:6 reads, “Torah is acquired through forty-eight things: through study, attentive listening, proper speech, through an understanding heart, an intelligent heart, through awe, through fear, through humility, through joy...” and so on, stretching beyond even forty-eight things.²⁶ The list of methods and dispositions outlined in Pirkei Avot 6:6 is not meant to be a checklist or a syllabus, but rather an acknowledgement that Torah is acquired through many different things. In her research paper, “A Pedagogy of the 48: Connecting Pirkei Avot, Life, and Learning,” Gila

²⁵Rifat Sonsino, “Finding Your Spiritual Path,” in *Six Jewish Spiritual Paths: A Rationalist Looks at Spirituality* (Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2000), 148-154.

²⁶Pirkei Avot 6:6.

Silverman argues, “Pirkei Avot 6:6 calls our attention to the different ways to acquire Torah, which reflect many different ways of being in, and engaging with, the world. It offers multiple starting points for thinking about, and sharing, our experiences, challenges, accomplishments, and wisdoms. And it reminds us that all of these have a place in our learning.”²⁷ The path to Torah is not narrow; it is broad enough to accommodate the learning styles and life experiences of all who seek it.²⁸

Additionally, Pirkei Avot 6:6 reiterates that Torah is not acquired merely through study. Torah, the Mishnah claims, is necessarily acquired through active engagement, both with the text and with the world. In the commentary *Pirkei Avot Lev Shalem: The Wisdom of Our Sages*, Martin S. Cohen argues:

“[Pirkei Avot 6:6 identifies] the specific qualities and skills one should cultivate in order to become the kind of insightful interpreter of the ancient text who not just *learns* Torah but who actually *lives* it. True Torah scholars do not merely reiterate what they have heard from their own teachers, after all. Instead, they cultivate a kind of learning that is personal and deeply idiosyncratic – while at the same time remaining fully faithful to the traditional lessons received from their teachers.”²⁹

It is not enough to stop at learning Torah; it must be lived. The spiritual curriculum aims to be a curriculum that is both lived and alive. It is lived in that much of its learning takes place outside of traditional classroom settings and in the day-to-day experiences of rabbis-in-formation. It is alive in that it is malleable and vibrant, transforming with each learner that travels down its path.

²⁷Gila Silverman, “A Pedagogy of the 48: Connecting Pirkei Avot, Life, and Learning,” M², January 25, 2023, <https://ieje.org/resources/a-pedagogy-of-the-48-connecting-pirkei-avot-life-and-learning/>, 3.

²⁸Diane Tickton Schuster explains four “learning orientations” that adult learners bring to their learning: goal-oriented learners seeking specific objectives; activity-oriented learners participating for the sake of the activity; learning-oriented learners with a fundamental desire to learn and grow; and spiritually-oriented learners who want to gain meaning or coherence in their own lives. Diane Tickton Schuster, *Jewish Lives, Jewish Learning: Adult Jewish Learning in Theory and Practice* (Millburn: Behrman House Publishing, 1999), 134-135.

²⁹Martin S. Cohen, Tamar Elad-Appelbaum, and Gordon Tucker, *Pirkei Avot Lev Shalem: The Wisdom of Our Sages* (New York: The Rabbinical Assembly, 2018), 294.

The Four Years

This spiritual curriculum is designed to take place over the course of four stateside years, after the completion of the Year-in-Israel program. Co-curriculars, such as spiritual direction, accompany the formal coursework, and there is a retreat themed around one of the three pillars every year. Years one and two include a required Spiritual Seminar, analogous to currently required professional courses such as PDE 401 Worship and Ritual and PDE 404 Human Relations. Overall, the curriculum stipulates ten required courses: eight core courses and two elective courses.³⁰ Of these ten, four are courses which are already required for rabbinic ordination (though will include greater spiritual integration);³¹ three are elective courses which are being codified into the spiritual curriculum as core courses;³² and two are electives chosen from an extensive list of offerings.³³ Only one, the Spiritual Seminar, is an entirely original course for the explicit purpose of this curriculum.

When the path begins in year one, it is at its narrowest point. All rabbis-in-information in one cohort take their first steps together within the first year. The first year features the most rigorous required core courses: PDE 402A Teaching Within a Reform Educational Setting and PDE 401 Worship and Ritual;³⁴ THE 401 Joining a Conversation in Jewish

³⁰The spiritual seminar, which is required for two years and meets biweekly, counts as one three-credit course.

³¹PDE 402A Teaching Within a Reform Educational Setting; PDE 401 Worship and Ritual; PDE 404 Human Relations; THS 500 Senior Seminar. “Cincinnati Campus Checklist,” “Rabbinical Course of Study,” HUC-JIR, accessed May 8, 2023, <https://huc.edu/schools-programs/rabbinical-school/rabbinical-ordination-and-master-of-arts-in-hebrew-letters-literature/rabbinical-school-course-of-study/>. For full course descriptions, see Chapter Four: The Proposed Curriculum.

³²THE 401 Joining a Conversation in Jewish Theology; THE 524 Hasidism; RAB 511 Mussar.

³³“Course Offerings By Term and Campus,” HUC-JIR Registrar, accessed January 29, 2024, <https://huc.edu/for-students/registrar/>. For a full list of eligible electives, see Chapter Four: The Proposed Curriculum.

³⁴Both of these courses are currently required for rabbinic students, but they take on a more intentional approach to spirituality within this curricular framework. “Cincinnati Campus Checklist,” “Rabbinical Course of Study.”

Theology;³⁵ and the Spiritual Seminar. It also includes a fall retreat centered on the Shleimut pillar to formally begin the curriculum.

Year one focuses on establishing a groundwork from which to spiritually launch. In addition to acquiring a shared vocabulary and frameworks through which to engage with spirituality, the first year emphasizes scaffolding a spiritual cohort. Yearly retreats are important for immersive and focused learning, but intentional spiritual community building is essential during the rest of the school year. The field researchers Foster, Dahill, Golemon, and Tolentino in *Educating Clergy: Teaching Practices and Pastoral Imagination* illustrate a wide range of small groups across a variety of seminaries that are meant to cultivate student spirituality. They mention “*havrutah* study pairs at Jewish Theological Seminary... St. John’s small-group faith-sharing processes... and Howard’s faith formation classes,” among others.³⁶ They write, “Small groups can be used to create a space in a busy seminary calendar to tend to students’ spiritual growth and they can center the spiritual life of the seminary community, thus contributing to students’ spiritual development... [providing] a place where students can, as one professor told us, ‘bridge the abstract and the concrete.’”³⁷ The time set aside for the Spiritual Seminar helps facilitate this spiritual centering, through group spiritual direction,³⁸ reflection, and practice within the spiritual beit midrash.

Year one also commences with a vital element of the spiritual curriculum: spiritual chevrotah. Foster, Dahill, Golemon, and Tolentino cite traditional Torah study in chevrotah as

³⁵THE 401 Joining a Conversation in Jewish Theology is currently an elective offering that would be required by the spiritual curriculum. “Course Offerings By Term and Campus.”

³⁶Charles R. Foster, Lisa E. Dahill, Lawrence A. Golemon, and Barbara Wang Tolentino, *Educating Clergy: Teaching Practices and Pastoral Imagination* (Stanford: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 280.

³⁷Foster et. al., *Educating Clergy*, 282.

³⁸For more on group spiritual direction, see Anne Kline, “*Chavurat Ruach* (A Fellowship of Spirit): Community for Spiritual Direction” in *Jewish Spiritual Direction*, 154-168.

a core spiritual element of Jewish seminary education.³⁹ The distinct cadence and culture of chevrutah study generates something that is greater than the sum of both chevrutah partners.

We read in Pirkei Avot:

“Two who sit [together] with the words of Torah between them – the Shekhinah [Divine Presence] is [fully] present between them, as it is said: ‘When [two] God-fearing individuals speak together, Adonai pays attention and listens; and this is [then] written up in a book of records featuring those who fear Adonai and who hold God’s name in [great] esteem’ (Malachi 3:16).”⁴⁰

Chevrutah study welcomes the Divine as the third study partner. In his commentary, Gordon Tucker argues that in the rabbinic imagination, chevrutah study enables a form of divine revelation that cannot be accessed individually. He writes, “It is only when two people... are discussing and sharing views on Torah that the Shekhinah is sure to be there. And this is so even if – or *especially if* – incompatible views are being articulated. God’s Presence no longer dwells where there is monistic certainty, but rather where there is honest struggle and debate.”⁴¹ By welcoming a partner in the form of a spiritual chevrutah into one’s spiritual formation, the spiritual learning and spiritual wrestling has the potential to be enhanced to nothing short of holy. Spiritual guidance in other forms, such as group and individual spiritual direction and rabbinic mentorship, will be a core element of the curriculum in addition to spiritual chevrutah. But the holy peer relationship of spiritual chevrutah provides each rabbi-in-formation with a fellow traveler, allowing them to help each other navigate their own winding paths.

Year two sees a broadening of the path, equipping rabbis-in-formation with the tools they need to forge on ahead. In addition to the second year of the Spiritual Seminar, students

³⁹Foster et. al., *Educating Clergy*, 284.

⁴⁰This Mishnah is often cited as Pirkei Avot 3:2; however, Cohen, Elad-Appelbaum, and Tucker number it Pirkei Avot 3:3. Cohen et. al., *Pirkei Avot Lev Shalem*, 115.

⁴¹Gordon Tucker, *Pirkei Avot Lev Shalem*, 116.

are required to enroll in core courses PDE 404 Human Relations and THE 524 Hasidism.⁴²

Spiritual chevrotah continues from year one, while spiritual direction transitions out of the group setting in Spiritual Seminar to individual spiritual direction assignments. The second year of the curriculum places an emphasis on experiential education and spiritual practice. Rooted in the Zerizut pillar, the Spiritual Seminar becomes a spiritual workshop, culminating in an immersive spiritual showcase at the spring retreat. Rabbis-in-information are able to make use of the Spiritual Seminar as a living laboratory, experimenting with a wide variety of spiritual modalities including everything from daily prayer and laying tefillin, to meditation and dance, and so on. Before they begin to shape their own personal spiritual practices, rabbis-in-information have the opportunity to broaden their horizons of what might be possible in spiritual formation.

Year three is the broadest of them all, each rabbi-in-information wandering parallel to, but perhaps at quite a distance from, each other. Following the conclusion of the Spiritual Seminar in the second year, the only required core course in the third year is RAB 511 Mussar.⁴³ The spiritual learning of the third year becomes more individualized as the focus shifts to the Hazon pillar. The third year is meant to be one of intentional reflection, aided by ongoing spiritual direction and spiritual chevrotah, as well as a winter Shabbaton themed around Hazon. Rabbis-in-information are asked to pause and engage in *cheshbon hanefesh*, spiritual accounting, in their penultimate year, taking stock of what spiritual tools they have acquired so far and what they have yet to learn.

⁴²PDE 404 Human Relations is currently required for rabbinic students. THE 524 Hasidism is currently an elective offering that would be required by the spiritual curriculum.

⁴³RAB 511 Mussar is currently an elective offering that would be required by the spiritual curriculum.

Year three also begins the two-year elective requirement. In years three and four, students are required to complete one elective course each year from a list of eligible offerings.⁴⁴ These electives cover a wide range of subject areas: for example, eligible courses include BIB 592 Special Topics: Bible and Art in Dialogue; MUS 592 Special Topic: The Nigun as Spiritual Practice; PDE 534 Moral Injury; RAB 524 Catastrophe: Lamentations; and RTE 564 Wise Activism, among others. Each of these elective courses is currently offered, or has been offered in the past five years, at HUC-JIR.⁴⁵ While it is certainly possible for the two electives to be completed concurrently or in consecutive semesters, the curriculum intentionally requires one elective each year to emphasize the ongoing nature of spiritual formation.⁴⁶ By spreading out the electives, rabbis-in-formation have the opportunity to be continuously intentional about their spiritual learning during each year of rabbinic school.

In the final year of the spiritual curriculum, which coincides with the final year prior to ordination, the individual paths of each rabbi-in-formation begin to intersect with each other once again. In addition to ongoing spiritual direction and spiritual chevrotah, as well as the second elective, rabbis-in-formation reunite as a cohort in THS 500 Senior Seminar.⁴⁷ The emphasis in year four returns once again to the Shleimut pillar, asking the same questions at the beginning and end of the curriculum. The spiritual curriculum culminates with the writing of a spiritual personal statement, in which rabbis-in-formation are able to articulate their spiritual growth thus far. The spiritual personal statement follows in the

⁴⁴For a full list of eligible electives, see Chapter Four: The Proposed Curriculum, page 93.

⁴⁵“Course Offerings By Term and Campus.”

⁴⁶See James Fowler, “Part III: Dynamics of Faith and Human Development” and “Stage 5. Conjunctive Faith,” in *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981) 89-116 and 184-198.

⁴⁷THS 500 Senior Seminar is currently required for rabbinic students.

tradition of Jewish ethical wills, *תּוֹרַת חַיִּים*, which reach as far back as the Torah, with Jacob gathering his sons to give his final teaching on his deathbed.⁴⁸ The spiritual personal statement is distinct from an ethical will in that it captures a snapshot of a rabbi-in-formation at one transformative moment on the cusp of ordination, rather than distilling an entire life. However, the framework for writing an ethical will provides a helpful template as rabbis-in-formation set out to write.⁴⁹ The writing process is catalyzed by a fall retreat centered around Shleimut, as well as ongoing reflection facilitated within the Senior Seminar.

Year four is not a conclusion but a checkpoint. While rabbis-in-formation are asked to demonstrate how they have transformed spiritually over the course of the four years, it is understood that their spiritual formation will be ongoing, perhaps throughout their entire rabbinate. The final year allows rabbis-in-formation to take stock of the spiritual toolkit that they have built, assess any gaps, and chart a course for their growth beyond ordination.

Resources

There can be no learning in isolation. Learners across all varieties of life stages and educational institutions bring their own personal experiences to their studies, and this is especially true for adult learners.⁵⁰ Even if the curriculum existed in a vacuum with no outside experiences impacting the course of study, the dynamic environment of students, teachers, administrators, physical and virtual classrooms, other coursework, financial factors,

⁴⁸Genesis 49.

⁴⁹See Jack Riemer and Nathaniel Stampfer, “Writing an Ethical Will” in *The Jewish Lights Spirituality Handbook: A Guide to Understanding, Exploring & Living a Spiritual Life*, ed. Stuart M. Matlins (Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2001), 368-377.

⁵⁰Stephen D. Brookfield, *Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning: A Comprehensive Analysis of Principles and Effective Practices* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1986), 25.

and more, cannot help but impact what is learned in any one particular course. James B.

Macdonald argues,

“Curriculum is much more than a plan for learning with appropriate materials and methods. Curriculum is the environment we construct, within which the so-called learning is observed. As such, it has implicit, latent, or hidden action components, as well as explicit, substantive ‘subject matter.’ The environment involves the leadership and managerial realms (with our rules and policies); the curriculum planning area (resources and materials); the instructional arena (methods, interpersonal relationships, etc.); *and* the qualities, characteristics, past experiences, capacities, and possibilities of all the people involved.”⁵¹

The curriculum as written is only one element in the learning ecosystem and it is necessarily impacted by other factors and what resources are available.

Fortunately, one of the most significant resources the curriculum requires is already in place at HUC-JIR: the courses themselves. As mentioned above, of the curriculum’s ten required courses, the Spiritual Seminar is the only one which would need to be created in order to implement the spiritual curriculum. Four of the core courses that are required for the spiritual curriculum are currently required for rabbis-in-formation: PDE 402A Teaching Within a Reform Educational Setting; PDE 401 Worship and Ritual; PDE 404 Human Relations; and THS 500 Senior Seminar.⁵² Each of these four courses are critical for rabbis-in-formation as they grow spiritually and develop their rabbinic voice and vision. While these courses have implicit spiritual elements, they can be made explicit with minor adjustments to the syllabi, such as written opportunities for reflection and intentional integration of Torah study.⁵³ Three other core courses required by the spiritual curriculum are not currently

⁵¹James B. Macdonald, “A Look At the Kohlberg Curriculum Framework for Moral Education,” in *Moral Development, Moral Education, and Kohlberg: Basic Issues in Philosophy, Psychology, Religion, and Education*, ed. Brenda Munsey (Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1980), 381-382.

⁵²“Cincinnati Campus Checklist,” “Rabbinical Course of Study.”

⁵³Dr. Ora Horn Prouser writes, “Rabbinic education properly includes not only study of the text, but an understanding of the spiritual elements involved in that study, and thoughts about how to use this material in serving the Jewish People. Some professors are able to cover both parts of this mandate. At times, to cover all of these elements, courses should be team taught, or, less optimally, the material is covered in two separate

required for rabbinic ordination, but they are electives that are routinely offered. They are: THE 401 Joining a Conversation in Jewish Theology; THE 524 Hasidism; and RAB 511 Mussar.⁵⁴ The two final courses within the spiritual curriculum are electives: rabbis-in-formation can select their two elective choices from a list of more than 30 courses that HUC-JIR currently offers or has offered in the past five years that address spiritual formation.⁵⁵

The other resource critical to the success of the curriculum is the faculty. Those who teach the core courses should not only be scholars and experts in their fields, but should also strive to be living examples of the spiritual formation they teach.⁵⁶ The authors of *Educating Clergy: Teaching Practices and Pastoral Imagination* cite Parker Palmer: “‘Good teaching... cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher’... Palmer reflects on the capacity of teachers for cultivating the ‘connectedness’ of student identity and integrity by weaving complex webs linking themselves, their subjects, and their students in ways that their students can, in turn, learn to use to weave a world for themselves.”⁵⁷ The ideal spiritual teacher is one who teaches from their own experiences with authenticity, modeling spiritual learning and helping rabbis-in-formation to locate moments of spirituality in their own lives.⁵⁸ Importantly, the faculty of the spiritual curriculum should not also serve in any administrative capacity. This allows for the most open and honest

courses.” Ora Horn Prouser, “Rabbinic Education: More than an Academic Exercise,” in *Keeping Faith in Rabbis: A Community Conversation on Rabbinical Education*, ed. Hayim Herring and Ellie Roscher (Avenida Books, 2014), 212.

⁵⁴“Course Offerings By Term and Campus.”

⁵⁵For a full list of eligible electives, see Chapter Four: The Proposed Curriculum, page 93.

⁵⁶Barry Chazan, “Jewish Education and Moral Development,” in *Moral Development, Moral Education, and Kohlberg*, 306.

⁵⁷Foster et. al., *Educating Clergy*, 113.

⁵⁸“Vulnerability is an important task as a teacher. If we’re asking people to care about something, we have to share, ‘this is why it’s important to me.’” Rabbi Jordan Braunig (author of “Daily Elul Creative Prompts”), Zoom interview with author, October 5, 2023. See also Stephen D. Brookfield, “Building Trust with Students,” in *The Skillful Teacher: On Technique, Trust, and Responsiveness in the Classroom*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1990), 163-176.

spiritual student-teacher relationship, with the mutual goal of spiritual formation unencumbered by other dynamics or contexts within the seminary.⁵⁹

Challenges

There are inevitably challenges when implementing a new curricular model. On the previous point, the faculty alone poses a great challenge. Not only might the dispositions and expertise of the current faculty not necessarily lend themselves to the spiritual curriculum, but administrators and deans regularly teach required courses at HUC-JIR, and the spiritual curriculum is likely to be most successful when those teaching the core courses do not occupy administrative positions.⁶⁰ The dispositions of the rabbis-in-formation themselves might create obstacles to the spiritual formation that they are able to intentionally undergo in a formal learning environment. Though integration of life experience is ideal, the spiritual curriculum as written cannot fully account for every experience and challenge that any particular rabbi-in-formation might encounter during their time in seminary and how it may impact their spiritual growth.⁶¹ The spiritual curriculum will also be the most successful when rabbis-in-formation participate with enthusiasm and commitment to their own spiritual growth.⁶² However, the degree to which there is buy-in will certainly vary from person to person. Given the high demands on students' time, it is not unlikely that an additional curricular framework could add to the pressure that rabbis-in-formation feel during their time in rabbinic school.

⁵⁹Rabbi Cheryl Peretz (Associate Dean, Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies), Zoom interview with author, October 6, 2023.

⁶⁰"Cincinnati Campus Checklist," "Rabbinical Course of Study."

⁶¹Brookfield, *Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning*, 92.

⁶²Malcolm S. Knowles, Richard A. Swanson, and Elwood F. Holton III, "New Perspectives on Andragogy," in *The Adult Learner: The Definitive Classic in Adult Education and Human Resource Development* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 181-201.

None of these challenges is insurmountable, and it is even possible that a well-executed spiritual curriculum could help alleviate other pressures felt by rabbis-in-formation and help to harmonize the program as a whole. Indeed, William Phillips argues for the integration of the spiritual, professional, and academic elements of the seminary:

“One does not develop a theology by carefully mastering a series of separate sciences or fields of knowledge and then applying them to various contexts. Rather, we recognize that persons have a theology with which they engage their various contexts... In theological education circles this means giving attention to focus not on the many disciplines which compartmentalize the educational process, but rather on the lived theology that is evident in the stories of individual persons, both students and faculty alike, and the faith communities, both historical and present. The result, it seems, is a way of thinking about ministry that takes seriously the context in which theology is done.”⁶³

The spiritual curriculum has the potential to directly address key issues facing students in the seminary today. Through the infusion of the spiritual into all coursework, rather than separating it from its various contexts, the rabbi-in-formation can authentically integrate and develop their spirituality.⁶⁴

Outcomes

Of all the various elements of the spiritual curriculum, assessing outcomes is perhaps the most difficult. If, as we read in Pirkei Avot 6:6, the path to Torah can be traveled in so many different ways, it would be a grave error to think that all travelers of the path will arrive at certain mile markers at the same time, let alone to the same landmarks at all. Rabbis engaged in the work of spiritual formation offer different articulations of assessing

⁶³William Phillips, “Faith Development and Theological Education,” in *Faith Development in the Adult Life Cycle*, ed. Kenneth Stokes (New York: W.H. Sadlier, 1982), 305.

⁶⁴Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 66.

spirituality – “you can smell it;” “I know it when I see it;” “there’s a certain *there* there;” “you can tell when it’s missing” – but all emphasize that it is an intangible element.⁶⁵

While each of the three pillars outline different desired outcomes, they largely focus on articulation and developing mindfulness and a spiritual vocabulary for one’s experiences. These outcomes can assist in taking the pulse on an individual’s spiritual formation, but they themselves cannot test for certain competencies or specific metrics. However, it is not any one particular outcome in isolation that matters; it is the entire trajectory that can measure spiritual growth. As Joan Cronin writes:

“[James Fowler’s stages of faith theory] require us to look closely at the person, and they identify milestones in development. *It is not the milestones themselves which are significant, but the movement they represent.*”⁶⁶ Developmental stage theories emphasize growth and help us to discover the processes of growth. It is the process of growth that are the proper starting point for adult religious education.”⁶⁷

The critical measurement of spiritual formation is just that: formation. As long as rabbis-in-formation are taking steps along the path, and are committed to staying on that path, the curriculum has succeeded in reaching its desired outcomes.

⁶⁵Various interviews with author, 2023-2024.

⁶⁶Emphasis mine.

⁶⁷Joan Cronin, “Implications for Adult Religious Education,” in *Faith Development in the Adult Life Cycle*, 292.

Curriculum Map

I. Shleimut

A. Enduring Understanding

1. Spirituality unites, infuses, and transcends the practical, academic, and pastoral elements of the rabbinate.

B. Essential Questions

1. Why am I becoming a rabbi?
2. What is my relationship with and understanding of God?
3. How does my spirituality impact and inform me?

C. Desired Outcomes

1. Rabbis-in-formation will be able to notice moments of holiness and connection in their experiences.
2. Rabbis-in-formation will be able to identify key texts, ideas, and thinkers that are core to their own Jewish lives.
3. Rabbis-in-formation will be able to develop language for their understanding of God.
4. Rabbis-in-formation will be able to articulate how spiritual formation interacts with all of the elements of the rabbinate.

II. Zerizut

A. Enduring Understanding

1. Spiritual formation is active, internally driven, and rooted in practice.

B. Essential Questions

1. How can I cultivate my own spiritual practice?
2. What practices help me feel connected, nourished, affirmed?
3. How am I living and interpreting Torah in all aspects of my life?

C. Desired Outcomes

1. Rabbis-in-formation will be able to explore different modalities as they work to cultivate their unique spiritual practice.
2. Rabbis-in-formation will be able to reflect on and enact practices that resonate with them and help them grow.
3. Rabbis-in-formation will be able to articulate how their spiritual practice translates into their day-to-day lives.

III. Hazon

A. Enduring Understanding

1. Spiritual formation is a lifelong process of reflection and integration, and it is never finished.

B. Essential Questions

1. What are places of ease in my spirituality? What are my growing edges?
2. What area of spiritual development will I focus on during my time in rabbinic school?
3. With what am I wrestling? What tools do I need in order to continue engaging?

C. Desired Outcomes

1. Rabbis-in-information will be able to reflect on their challenges and natural tendencies within spiritual growth and practice.
2. Rabbis-in-information will be able to identify a personal spiritual goal or project.
3. Rabbis-in-information will be able to describe their personal spiritual toolbox that both grounds them and helps them grow.

Evidence for Learning

- A. Rabbis-in-information will be able to articulate their spiritual growth in the form of a personal statement prior to ordination.
- B. Rabbis-in-information will be able to demonstrate and describe how they have transformed spiritually at the conclusion of the four-year curriculum.

Curriculum Overview and Timeline

Year	Pillar	Essential Question	Desired Outcomes	Methodology
1	Shleimut	Why am I becoming a rabbi?	Rabbis-in-information will be able to identify key texts, ideas, and thinkers that are central to their own Jewish lives. Rabbis-in-information will be able to notice moments of holiness and connection in their experiences.	<p>Coursework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● THE 401 Joining a Conversation in Jewish Theology ● PDE 402A Teaching Within a Reform Educational Setting ● PDE 401 Worship and Ritual <p>Co-curriculars</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fall retreat: Shleimut ● Spiritual Seminar ● Spiritual chevrotah
	Zerizut	How can I cultivate my own spiritual practice?	Rabbis-in-information will be able to explore different modalities as they work to cultivate their unique spiritual practice.	
	Hazon	What are places of ease in my spirituality? What are my growing edges?	Rabbis-in-information will be able to reflect on their challenges and natural tendencies within spiritual growth and practice.	
2	Shleimut	What is my relationship with and understanding of God?	Rabbis-in-information will be able to develop language for their understanding of God. Rabbis-in-information will be able to notice moments of holiness and connection in their experiences.	<p>Coursework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PDE 404 Human Relations ● THE 524 Hasidism <p>Co-curriculars</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Spring retreat: Zerizut ● Spiritual Seminar ● Spiritual direction ● Ongoing spiritual chevrotah
	Zerizut	How can I cultivate my own spiritual practice?	Rabbis-in-information will be able to explore different modalities as they work to cultivate their unique spiritual practice.	
	Hazon	What area of spiritual development will I focus on during my time in rabbinic school?	Rabbis-in-information will be able to identify a personal spiritual goal or project.	

Year	Pillar	Essential Question	Desired Outcomes	Methodology
3	Shleimut	How does my spirituality impact and inform me?	<p>Rabbis-in-formation will be able to articulate how spiritual formation interacts with all of the elements of the rabbinate.</p> <p>Rabbis-in-formation will be able to notice moments of holiness and connection in their experiences.</p>	<p>Coursework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● RAB 511 Mussar ● Elective <p>Co-curriculars</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Winter Shabbaton: Hazon ● Ongoing spiritual direction and spiritual chevrotah
	Zerizut	What practices help me feel connected, nourished, affirmed?	Rabbis-in-formation will be able to reflect on and enact practices that resonate with them and help them grow.	
	Hazon	With what am I wrestling? What tools do I need in order to continue engaging?	Rabbis-in-formation will be able to describe their personal spiritual toolbox that both grounds them and helps them grow.	
4	Shleimut	Why am I becoming a rabbi?	Rabbis-in-formation will be able to notice moments of holiness and connection in their experiences.	<p>Coursework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● THS 500 Senior Seminar ● Personal statement ● Elective <p>Co-curriculars</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fall retreat: Shleimut ● Ongoing spiritual direction and spiritual chevrotah
	Zerizut	How am I living and interpreting Torah in all aspects of my life?	Rabbis-in-formation will be able to articulate how their spiritual practice translates into their day-to-day lives.	
	Hazon	With what am I wrestling? What tools do I need in order to continue engaging?	<p>Rabbis-in-formation will be able to reflect on their challenges and natural tendencies within spiritual growth and practice.</p> <p>Rabbis-in-formation will be able to describe their personal spiritual toolbox that both grounds them and helps them grow.</p>	

Chapter Four: The Proposed Curriculum

Shleimut

Shleimut שְׁלֵמוּת or “wholeness” corresponds to וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ, “with all your being.”¹ This pillar ties all the strands of the spiritual curriculum together, as well as to integrate spirituality within the entirety of the rabbinic program. It asks rabbis-in-formation to pause, notice, and simply be aware of their ongoing formation. The Shleimut pillar aims to help rabbis-in-formation cultivate mindfulness so that in each of their courses – whether a course in the spiritual curriculum or not – and within their fieldwork they are more attuned to the holy and how God manifests in their everyday experiences. Additionally, the Shleimut pillar equips rabbis-in-formation with the vocabulary and textual grounding to navigate Jewish spirituality.

I. Key Text

- A. “Should we despair of our being unable to attain perfect purity? We should, if perfection were our goal. However, we are not obliged to be perfect once and for all, but only to rise again and again beyond the level of the self.” Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel²

In addition to “wholeness,” Shleimut שְׁלֵמוּת can be translated as complete, perfect, or at peace.³ Yet, as Rabbi Heschel says, perfection is not the goal of the spiritual curriculum. Indeed, “perfect” spirituality is nearly impossible to define and almost certainly impossible to achieve. The goal, Shleimut emphasizes, is to continue to be aware of wherever one is on the

¹Everett Fox, *The Five Books of Moses* (New York: Schocken Books, 1995 accessed February 19, 2024), https://www.sefaria.org/The_Five_Books_of_Moses_by_Everett_Fox.

²Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Between God and Man: An Interpretation of Judaism* (New York: Free Press, 1959), 188.

³Samuel Rolles Driver, Francis Brown, and Charles Augustus Briggs, s.v. “שְׁלֵמוּת” in *The Brown, Driver, Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (accessed February 8, 2024), <https://www.sefaria.org/BDB>.

journey, and to continue to reach beyond that place. When asked about a spiritual program for rabbis-in-formation, Rabbi Cheryl Peretz said, “I don’t think it’s about an end result. It’s about a process. We should never be finished – we should be works in progress for our entire lives.”⁴

II. Enduring Understanding

- A. Spirituality unites, infuses, and transcends the practical, academic, and pastoral elements of the rabbinate.

Rabbi Adina Allen, co-founder and Creative Director of the Jewish Studio Project, explained that the intellectual and the spiritual are “two DNA strands that have been separated but need to be rewoven. It is damaging us to have them separated.”⁵ Indeed, this bifurcation is an artificial imposition onto Jewish tradition. Introducing his spiritual pedagogy for adult education, “*L’shem Yichud: A Pedagogy For the Sake of Integration*,” Rabbi Jesse Paikin writes, “The earliest rabbis of the Talmud...profoundly believed that the influence of teaching and learning exceeds knowledge acquisition. They elevated learning as a spiritual act imbued with the creative energies that formed the cosmos, with the power to hasten redemption through sacred relationships, and having a purposeful impact that transcends space and time.”⁶ Shleimut compels rabbis-in-formation to see all learning in the seminary as a spiritual act.

III. Essential Questions

- A. Why am I becoming a rabbi?
- B. What is my relationship with and understanding of God?
- C. How does my spirituality impact and inform me?

⁴Rabbi Cheryl Peretz (Associate Dean, Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies), Zoom interview with author, October 6, 2023.

⁵Rabbi Adina Allen (Co-Founder and Creative Director, Jewish Studio Project), Zoom interview with author, October 13, 2023.

⁶Jesse Paikin, “*L’shem Yichud: A Pedagogy For the Sake of Integration*,” M², January 25, 2023, <https://ieje.org/resources/lshem-yichud-a-pedagogy-for-the-sake-of-integration/>, 1.

IV. Desired Outcomes

- A. Rabbis-in-formation will be able to notice moments of holiness and connection in their experiences.
- B. Rabbis-in-formation will be able to identify key texts, ideas, and thinkers that are core to their own Jewish lives.
- C. Rabbis-in-formation will be able to develop language for their understanding of God.
- D. Rabbis-in-formation will be able to articulate how spiritual formation interacts with all of the elements of the rabbinate.

Year 1

I. Key Text

- A. **“Then a messenger of Adonai called to him from heaven: ‘Abraham! Abraham!’ And he answered, ‘הִנְנִי, Here I am.’” Genesis 22:11**

The first year – and the final year – of Shleimut asks rabbis-in-formation to consider what made them say הִנְנִי, here I am, ready to become a rabbi. הִנְנִי is a declaration of presence: here I stand, all of me, aware and present in this moment.⁷

II. Essential Question

- A. **Why am I becoming a rabbi?**

Shleimut encourages rabbis-in-formation to ask themselves this fundamental question with regularity.⁸ The question can be asked in a number of ways: am I called to become a rabbi? Did I choose this path, or did I have no choice?⁹ How has my answer changed over time, and why? How has it stayed the same? Am I satisfied with my answer, and if not, what am I

⁷Diane Tickton Schuster, *Jewish Lives, Jewish Learning: Adult Jewish Learning in Theory and Practice* (Millburn: Behrman House Publishing, 1999), 15.

⁸It was only in writing this curriculum that I realized that as a rabbinic student, I have only been seriously asked this question (by myself or others) twice: first in the context of my HUC-JIR admissions interview, and second in the context of CCAR job placement interviews.

⁹“As the Dean of the ALEPH Rabbinic Program, Rabbi Marcia Prager once told us students, ‘A rabbi is what you should be when you don’t have any choice.’” Julie Hilton Danan, “The ALEPH Program: An Alternative Path to the Rabbinate,” in *Keeping Faith in Rabbis: A Community Conversation on Rabbinical Education*, ed. Haim Herring and Ellie Roscher (Avenida Books, 2014), 244.

going to do about it? How do my work and my education align with my “why,” and if they don’t, how can I work towards alignment?

III. Desired Outcomes

A. Rabbis-in-information will be able to identify key texts, ideas, and thinkers that are central to their own Jewish lives.

This desired outcome can be achieved through rabbis-in-information approaching all of their courses with mindful awareness and continued engagement with the essential question. Rabbi Joshua Saltzman argues for a postmodern approach to Torah study as a framework for spirituality: “[A postmodern approach to Torah] focuses on the particularities of the human subject, existing in a particular place, at a particular time and within a particular historical context. These particularities produce the possibility of knowledge. They, as it were, construct our reality... In this context, the study of Torah is not simply the acquisition of knowledge but becomes something more akin to the art of knowing.”¹⁰ In other words, rabbis-in-information can come to their studies with themselves as a subject, open to the possibility of gaining self-knowledge.

B. Rabbis-in-information will be able to notice moments of holiness and connection in their experiences.

In the first year of Shleimut, rabbis-in-information are encouraged to practice mindfulness, facilitated by prompts and exercises in the Spiritual Seminar. Rabbi James L. Mirel and Karen Bonnell Werth write, “Mindfulness practice requires that we focus our hearts and minds on the present... [We strive to] create a mental space to be fully aware of the here and now so we can be fully alive in the present. From this position, we can be aware of the

¹⁰Joshua Saltzman, “Talmud Torah and Spirituality: A Postmodern Perspective,” in *Paths of Faithfulness: Personal Essays on Jewish Spirituality*, ed. Carol Ochs, Kerry M. Olitzky, and Joshua Saltzman (Hoboken: KTAV Publishing House, 1997) 142.

importance of the moment, the true miracle of our being, and connect with the Holiness of life.”¹¹

IV. Coursework

A. PDE 402 Teaching Within a Reform Educational Setting

This course primarily addresses the second desired outcome: “Rabbis-in-formation will be able to notice moments of holiness and connection in their experiences,” but it also touches on the first desired outcome: “Rabbis-in-formation will be able to identify key texts, ideas, and thinkers that are central to their own Jewish lives.” PDE 402 addresses the desired outcomes through these selected texts:

- hooks, bell. *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope*. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Noddings, Nel. *Caring: A Relational Approach to Ethical and Moral Education*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.
- Palmer, Parker J. *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc. Publishers, 1998.

B. THE 401 Joining a Conversation in Jewish Theology

In a reverse of PDE 402, this course primarily addresses the first desired outcome: “Rabbis-in-formation will be able to identify key texts, ideas, and thinkers that are central to their own Jewish lives,” but it also addresses the second desired outcome: “Rabbis-in-formation will be able to notice moments of holiness and connection in their experiences.” THE 401 addresses the desired outcomes through these selected texts:

- Adler, Rachel. *Engendering Judaism: An Inclusive Theology and Ethics*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1999.
- Borowitz, Eugene B. *Renewing the Covenant: A Theology for the Postmodern Jew*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2010.

¹¹James L. Mirel and Karen Bonnell Werth, *Stepping Stones to Jewish Spiritual Living: Walking the Path Morning, Noon, and Night* (Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2000), 15.

- Buber, Martin. *I and Thou*. New York: Scribner, 1955.
- Plaskow, Judith. *Standing Again at Sinai: Judaism from a Feminist Perspective*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990.

V. Co-Curriculars

A. Fall retreat: Shleimut

The fall retreat in the first year is themed around the Shleimut pillar. It serves as an overview to the spiritual curriculum as a whole and in introduction to the three pillars framework.

Rabbis-in-formation take significant time writing a spiritual reflection on the retreat, which they will revisit at the final Shleimut retreat in year four.

B. Spiritual Seminar

The Spiritual Seminar primarily addresses the second desired outcome, “Rabbis-in-formation will be able to notice moments of holiness and connection in their experiences,” through mindfulness practices and engaging as a cohort in group spiritual direction. It also addresses the first desired outcome: “Rabbis-in-formation will be able to identify key texts, ideas, and thinkers that are central to their own Jewish lives,” through the spiritual beit midrash. The Spiritual Seminar addresses the desired outcomes through these selected texts:

- Hoffman, Lawrence A. *The Journey Home: Discovering the Deep Spiritual Wisdom of the Jewish Tradition*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2002.
- Kaplan, Aryeh. *Jewish Meditation: A Practical Guide*. New York: Schocken Books, 1985.

Year 2

I. Key Text

A. “You must be **תמים wholehearted with your God.” Deuteronomy 18:13**

Shleimut parallels **תמים** as both can be translated as “whole.” The rabbi-in-formation is a whole person, and therefore must encounter God as their entire selves, just as they encounter all experiences and opportunities for learning and growth.

II. Essential Question

A. What is my relationship with and understanding of God?

Of all the essential questions in the spiritual curriculum, this one is perhaps the most challenging to address and the most dynamic. Like all essential questions, the goal is not to define a static answer, but instead to engage with it and wrestle with what it raises.

III. Desired Outcomes

A. Rabbis-in-information will be able to develop language for their understanding of God.

As stated above, the goal is not to lock rabbis-in-information into an articulated belief in God, but rather to practice putting words to the ephemeral concept of the Holy. Rabbi Ruth Sohn argued, “One clear need that can be helpful for everyone, but is essential for clergy, is developing an awareness of and sensitivity to how to cultivate and deepen one’s ability to be awake and present to the holy. To be able to put language to it.”¹²

B. Rabbis-in-information will be able to notice moments of holiness and connection in their experiences.

In the second year of Shleimut, this desired outcome is oriented towards articulation of spirituality, beyond noticing. Rabbi Cheryl Peretz posited:

“I experience spirituality in retrospect. The ability to identify a moment with God comes retrospectively. We don’t say, ‘oh, I’m going to go have an encounter with God!’ It’s only in retrospect that we contextualize it as an experience with God. God encounters feel very hard to concretize in a curriculum. The best way I know how to do it is to live the Jewish tradition, because if we’re paying attention, it gives us the opportunities to live for those moments.”¹³

IV. Coursework

A. PDE 404 Human Relations

This course primarily addresses the second desired outcome, “Rabbis-in-information will be

¹²Rabbi Ruth Sohn (Spirituality Initiative Coordinator at HUC-JIR), Zoom interview with author, September 27, 2023.

¹³Rabbi Cheryl Peretz, Zoom interview with author, October 6, 2023.

able to notice moments of holiness and connection in their experiences,” emphasizing the potential for holiness within interpersonal connection. PDE 404 addresses the desired outcome through this selected text:

- Shields, Michele, Allison Kestenbaum, and Laura B. Dunn. “Spiritual AIM and the Work of the Chaplain: A Model for Assessing Spiritual Needs and Outcomes in Relationships.” *Palliative and Supportive Care* 13, no. 1 (2015): 75-89. <https://spiritualaim.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Original-Spiritual-AIM-Paper.pdf>

B. THE 542 Hasidism

This course primarily addresses the first desired outcome, “Rabbis-in-formation will be able to develop language for their understanding of God,” though it also touches on the second desired outcome. THE 542 addresses the desired outcomes through these selected texts:

- Buber, Martin. *The Origin and Meaning of Hasidism*. Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press International, 1988.
- Green, Arthur and Ariel Evan Mayse, editors. *A New Hasidism: Branches*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2019.

V. Co-Curriculars

Both of the year two Shleimut desired outcomes are addressed through individual spiritual direction and continuation of spiritual chevrotah in the Spiritual Seminar. Spiritual directors are assigned to rabbis-in-formation at the beginning of the second year.

Year 3

I. Key Text

- A. **“From within and from without you shall cover it’ (Exodus 25:11). Rava said: Any Torah scholar whose inside is not like his outside, whose behavior is insincere, is not considered a Torah scholar.” Yoma 72b**

Spiritual formation must serve the rabbi-in-formation intrinsically, not simply as a means for a vocational end; at the same time, spiritual formation cannot be a purely self-interested activity, and should impact how the rabbi-in-formation moves throughout the world. This is a key feature of the Shleimut pillar: the insides and outsides must match.

II. Essential Question

A. How does my spirituality impact and inform me?

Rabbi Shawn Zevit articulated these questions that rabbis-in-formation ought to ask themselves: “What is enlivening me? At the end of my practice, do I leave more enlivened, informed, inspirited, passionate, and connected? What is the byproduct of the practice?”¹⁴

III. Desired Outcomes

A. Rabbis-in-formation will be able to articulate how spiritual formation interacts with all of the elements of the rabbinate.

Just as spiritual formation impacts the entire person, it necessarily must impact all elements of the rabbinate. Individual rabbis-in-formation have different passions and skillsets, but their insides and outsides much match; in other words, a rabbi-in-formation should not appear a fundamentally different person when giving a sermon versus at the oneg, or teaching adult education versus in the hospital room. To that end, spiritual formation must be understood as holistic, not addressing only one particular part of the rabbi-in-formation.

B. Rabbis-in-formation will be able to notice moments of holiness and connection in their experiences.

Ideally, spiritual practice facilitates moments of holiness and connection. As rabbis-in-formation continue to think critically about their developing spiritual practice, they are asked to reflect how it contributes to moments of holiness and connection, and where it falls short.

IV. Coursework

A. RAB 511 Mussar

RAB 511 Mussar works towards the key text of the third year of Shleimut: a person’s insides should match their outsides. The work of Mussar engages all elements of the rabbi-in-

¹⁴Rabbi Shawn Zevit (Director of Hashpa’ah: Training Program for Jewish Spiritual Directors at ALEPH), Zoom interview with author, October 5, 2023.

formation, and therefore addresses both desired outcomes. They are also addressed through the selected text:

- Morinis, Alan. *Everyday Holiness: The Jewish Spiritual Path of Mussar*. Boston: Trumpeter, 2007.

V. Co-Curriculars

As rabbis-in-formation continue spiritual direction and spiritual chevrutah in the third year of the curriculum, they particularly pay attention to the first desired outcome, “Rabbis-in-formation will be able to articulate how spiritual formation interacts with all of the elements of the rabbinate.”

Year 4

I. Key Text

- A. “...as it is written: ‘And Jacob came שָׁלֵם whole to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Paddan-aram; and he graced the countenance of the city’ (Genesis 33:18). Rav said, the meaning of: And Jacob came whole, is: Whole in his body, whole in his money, whole in his Torah.” Shabbat 33b**

By the fourth year of the spiritual curriculum, rabbis-in-formation are on the cusp of coming to their first opportunities to serve as ordained rabbis. Shleimut asks rabbis-in-formation to consider in this final year how they might arrive to meet those they will serve as their whole and wholly integrated selves.

II. Essential Question

A. Why am I becoming a rabbi?

Just as in year one, Shleimut asks rabbis-in-formation this fundamental question. Throughout their final year, they might ask themselves: am I called to become a rabbi? How has my answer changed over time, and why? How has it stayed the same?

III. Desired Outcomes

A. Rabbis-in-information will be able to notice moments of holiness and connection in their experiences.

Every Elul, Rabbi Jordan Braunig prepares creative prompts that he emails daily to a listserv of thousands of spiritual seekers. He shared, “I’m living life from at least Rosh Chodesh Av through Elul with my eyes wide open. I’m looking for anything that might be good content. I think, oh, that might connect to that, I see this, it connects to this – I try creating multiple entry points in the prompt, but they all lead back to the original teaching, the original question.”¹⁵ In this final year of the spiritual curriculum, rabbis-in-information are asked to notice moments of connection within themselves and their own experiences, and reflect on their most accessible spiritual entry points.

IV. Coursework

A. THS 500 Senior Seminar

This course addresses the desired outcome through requiring each rabbi-in-information to write a personal statement of spiritual development. Through reflection and writing, they are asked to chart key moments in their spiritual growth over the four years of the curriculum.

V. Co-Curriculars

A. Fall retreat: Shleimut

Just as in year one, the fall retreat in the fourth year is themed around the Shleimut pillar. Rabbis-in-information take significant time writing a spiritual reflection on the retreat and comparing it to their original reflection from year one, which serves as the basis for the personal statement in Senior Seminar. Though it is at the beginning of the academic year, the fall retreat is a capstone for the entirety of the spiritual curriculum as rabbis-in-information pull all of the pieces of their spiritual formation together.

¹⁵Rabbi Jordan Braunig (author of “Daily Elul Creative Prompts”), Zoom interview with author, October 5, 2023.

Zerizut

Zerizut זריזות or “alacrity” corresponds to וּבְכָל-מְאֹדֶךָ, “with all your substance.”¹⁶ This is the tachlis pillar, empowering rabbis-in-information with the tools and practices required for spiritual formation. Zerizut treats spirituality as a muscle that must be exercised, and spiritual practice as a discipline that must be habituated. Through Zerizut, rabbis-in-information explore a variety of spiritual modalities and ultimately discern which practices are most meaningful to them.

I. Key Text

- A. “Surely, this Instruction which I enjoin upon you this day is not too baffling for you, nor is it beyond reach. It is not in the heavens, that you should say, ‘Who among us can go up to the heavens and get it for us and impart it to us, that we may observe it?’ Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who among us can cross to the other side of the sea and get it for us and impart it to us, that we may observe it?’ No, the thing is very close to you, in your mouth and in your heart, to observe It.” Deuteronomy 30:11-14

Many Jews avoid spiritual practice altogether because they are anxious about getting it “right.”¹⁷ There is endless information to distill, myriad practices with which to engage, and competing ideologies from which to choose. Discovering authentic Jewish spirituality can easily become an overwhelming venture. Zerizut declares to rabbis-in-information that it is not beyond their reach. Spirituality is already close, and spiritual practice is ready to be observed.

II. Enduring Understanding

- A. Spiritual formation is active, internally driven, and rooted in practice.

While there is great value in study as a spiritual practice, it cannot be where spiritual practice stops.¹⁸ Indeed, even if it were, making spiritual Torah study a consistent habit requires

¹⁶Fox, *The Five Books of Moses*.

¹⁷Eugene B. Borowitz, “Faith and Method in Modern Jewish Theology,” in *Studies in the Meaning of Judaism (JPS Scholar of Distinction Series)* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2002), 69-84.

¹⁸Saltzman, “Talmud Torah and Spirituality,” 137.

practice and discipline. Zerizut emphasizes that spirituality is cultivated over time: like a muscle, it is strengthened with use and weakened with neglect. This pillar also reminds rabbis-in-information that the effort they put into their own spiritual formation directly correlates with how much they get out of the spiritual curriculum.

III. Essential Questions

- A. How can I cultivate my own spiritual practice?
- B. What practices help me feel connected, nourished, affirmed?
- C. How am I living and interpreting Torah in all aspects of my life?

IV. Desired Outcomes

- A. Rabbis-in-information will be able to explore different modalities as they work to cultivate their unique spiritual practice.
- B. Rabbis-in-information will be able to reflect on and enact practices that resonate with them and help them grow.
- C. Rabbis-in-information will be able to articulate how their spiritual practice translates into their day-to-day lives.

Year 1

I. Key Text

- A. **“Why was the Torah given in the wilderness, in a place belonging to no one, publicly and openly? To teach us that just as the wilderness is open to everyone, so too the teachings of the Torah are available to anyone who wishes to learn.” Mekhilta Bachodesh 5**

The first year of Zerizut is designed to break down barriers to entry and combat the imposter syndrome that may be felt when embarking on a spiritual path. Rabbi Braunig affirmed: “We all have imposter syndrome. Our task is figuring out how to be ourselves and to be guides to other people, our fellow travelers. We can say, ‘I don’t have all the answers, but I am here and I care about you.’”¹⁹

¹⁹Rabbi Jordan Braunig, Zoom interview with author, October 5, 2023.

II. Essential Question

A. How can I cultivate my own spiritual practice?

We have access to, as Rabbi Adina Allen explains, “tools that Jews have used and iterated and changed for millennia. We can tap into the energy that has been accrued in those resources.”²⁰ With so many resources available for spiritual formation, every rabbi-in-formation can craft a practice that is meaningful to them.

III. Desired Outcome

A. Rabbis-in-formation will be able to explore different modalities as they work to cultivate their unique spiritual practice.

While this desired outcome is the central focus of the second year, it begins in the first year through PDE 401 Worship and Ritual by engaging prayer as a spiritual practice, and through the Spiritual Seminar as rabbis-in-formation begin to experiment with modalities.

IV. Coursework

A. PDE 401 Worship and Ritual

This course addresses the desired outcome as rabbis-in-formation explore different modalities within prayer and ritual moments. PDE 401 addresses the desired outcome through the selected text:

- Comins, Mike. *Making Prayer Real: Leading Spiritual Voices on Why Prayer is Difficult and What to Do About It*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2010.

V. Co-Curriculars

A. Spiritual Seminar

The Spiritual Seminar introduces Zerizut and different modalities through some in-seminar practice, though primarily through the selected text:

- Matlins, Stuart M., editor. *The Jewish Lights Spirituality Handbook: A Guide to Understanding, Exploring & Living a Spiritual Life*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2001.

²⁰Rabbi Adina Allen, Zoom interview with author, October 13, 2023.

Year 2

I. Key Texts

- A. “Is study greater or action greater? Rabbi Tarfon answered and said, ‘Action is greater.’ Rabbi Akiva answered and said, ‘Study is greater.’ They all answered and said, ‘Study is greater, since study brings about action.” Kiddushin 40b**

While there is value in Torah *lishmah*, Torah study for its own sake, the value articulated by the rabbis in this text is that study must be for the sake of something. Zerizut in the second year in of the spiritual curriculum demands rigorous study followed by rigorous action by rabbis-in-information. Rabbis-in-information can discern what actions their study might bring about by asking questions Rabbi Paikin articulates in the goals of his pedagogy: “[Students can] articulate what their learning is for the sake of (‘Why am I doing this, rather than something else?’) [and] understand what is at stake in their learning (‘What is the impact beyond knowledge acquisition?’)”²¹

II. Essential Question

- A. How can I cultivate my own spiritual practice?**

In year two of the spiritual curriculum, rabbis-in-information are empowered to make spirituality their own. They have opportunities within the curricular framework to explore a variety of practices; outside of the framework, however, they must consider how they can prioritize spiritual habits in their lives beyond the seminary.

III. Desired Outcome

- A. Rabbis-in-information will be able to explore different modalities as they work to cultivate their unique spiritual practice.**

Rabbi Ohad Ezrahi insists that for those searching for guidance in Jewish spirituality, “the seeker needs a school that does not presume to know what is desired, but allows [the

²¹Paikin, “*L’shem Yichud*,” 5.

students] to develop according to the root of their soul and equip them with adequate tools for the task of the search.”²² The spiritual curriculum does not prescribe a set spiritual practice, but rather seeks to widen the horizons of what is possible and provide rabbis-in-formation with what they require to get there.

IV. Co-Curriculars

A. Spiritual Seminar

Significant time is devoted in year two of the Spiritual Seminar to Zerizut. The desired outcome is facilitated through deep exploration of different spiritual modalities and the completion of a spiritual practice project. It is also addressed through these selected texts:

- Mirel, James L. and Karen Bonnell Werth. *Stepping Stones to Jewish Spiritual Living: Walking the Path Morning, Noon, and Night*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2000.
- Sonsino, Rifat. *Six Jewish Spiritual Paths: A Rationalist Looks at Spirituality*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2000.

B. Spring retreat: Zerizut

The desired outcome is addressed in the spring retreat’s spiritual project showcase. Rabbis-in-formation learn new modalities from their classmates as well as share their own.

Year 3

II. Key Texts

- A. “The Sages taught: One may neither stand to pray from sorrow nor from laziness, nor from laughter, nor from conversation, nor from frivolity, nor from idle matters. Rather, one should approach prayer imbued with the joy of a mitzvah.” Berakhot 31a**

Carol Ochs contends that spirituality is primarily a relationship to God. She writes that we understand God through study and speak with God through prayer, then argues:

²²Ohad Ezrahi, quoted in Rachel Werczberger, *Jews in the Age of Authenticity: Jewish Spiritual Renewal in Israel* (New York: Peter Lang, 2017), 23.

“But all of these are only the instruments we must use in our quest to develop our relationship. We may build a house, but it remains only a structure and does not become a home without the love of the people who reside there. We can discover something, but it becomes a treasure only when we value it. And we can structure a relationship with God, but it becomes fruitful only when we imbue it with our love.”²³

III. Essential Question

A. What practices help me feel connected, nourished, affirmed?

On the morning of her ordination, Rabbi Rachel Barenblat writes, Reb Zalman shared advice with the soon-to-be rabbis: “‘Stay in *69havruta*,’ he urged us. ‘Keep studying Torah.’ Or Hasidut or prayer or Talmud or whatever text contains the spiritual vitamins our soul most needs.”²⁴ The task of the rabbi-in-formation in year three of Zerizut is to discern their own “spiritual vitamins,” the spiritual habits and practices that keep them grounded and centered, and then to continue cultivating and deepening those habits.

IV. Desired Outcome

A. Rabbis-in-formation will be able to reflect on and enact practices that resonate with them and help them grow.

Rabbi Zevit suggested one framework for reflection is to consider who we were before the spiritual practice, and who we became after the practice. He proposed asking, “Does this practice affirm the actions I’ve taken before, or is it a *bakasha*?”²⁵ When we think about the form of the practice and its expression, we should consider: what does it affirm and what does it point us to do? We say in Ma Tovv, ‘*v’ani t’filati*’ – I will *be* the prayer. Spiritual practice impacts who we are every day. We are always spiritual beings.”²⁶

²³Carol Ochs, “Jewish Spirituality: The Way of Love,” in *Paths of Faithfulness*, 103-104.

²⁴Rachel Barenblat, “In the Right Direction: *Hashpaah* and Spiritual Life,” in *Keeping Faith in Rabbis*, 19.

²⁵Spiritual request; traditionally, a category of prayer.

²⁶Rabbi Shawn Zevit, Zoom interview with author, October 5, 2023.

V. Coursework

A. RAB 511 Mussar

RAB 511 addresses the two facets of the desired outcome: reflect and enact. The course asks rabbis-in-formation to be critically self-reflective as they engage in the work of Mussar.

Through the construction of a personal Mussar curriculum, they enact a new practice and continue to grow through it. It is also addressed through these selected texts:

- Morinis, Alan. *Everyday Holiness: The Jewish Spiritual Path of Mussar*. Boston: Trumpeter, 2007.
- Morinis, Alan. *Every Day, Holy Day: 365 Days of Teachings and Practices from the Jewish Tradition of Mussar*. Boston: Trumpeter, 2010.

B. Elective

Year three begins the elective requirement within the spiritual curriculum. Rabbis-in-formation address the desired outcome through enrolling in coursework that resonates with them, allowing them to deepen and further individualize their spiritual growth.

VI. Co-Curriculars

As rabbis-in-formation continue spiritual direction and spiritual chevrotah in the third year of the curriculum, they are able to reflect on their spiritual practices in partnership with those who are committed to their growth and spiritual resonance.

Year 4

I. Key Texts

A. “May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable to You, Adonai, my rock and my redeemer.” Psalm 19:15

The spiritual practice – the words – and the internal spiritual development – the meditations – of the rabbi-in-formation must be congruent. As rabbis-in-formation prepare to launch forth from the seminary, they can reflect on if their words and their meditations are an acceptable foundation to sustain them spiritually.

II. Essential Question

A. How am I living and interpreting Torah in all aspects of my life?

Rabbi David A. Teutsch, Director of the Center for Jewish Ethics at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, asserts, “More important than any one [of the fundamental components of rabbinic formation] is the necessity that all of those things be integrated into a seamless whole within the character of the rabbi. The sum is far greater than the parts... One can acquire more facts or skills later, but if one does not enter the rabbinate... with integrity and spiritual seriousness, nothing else can make up for that lack.”²⁷ Rabbis-in-formation are asked to articulate how their spirituality is being integrated into a “seamless whole” within them. In other words, they must carry their spiritual formation with them into all that they do, not merely when they are performing the role of “rabbi.”

III. Desired Outcome

A. Rabbis-in-formation will be able to articulate how their spiritual practice translates into their day-to-day lives.

In year four, rabbis-in-formation are asked to reflect on how their practice spiritually nourishes and affirms them, and in what areas they ought to shore up their spiritual resources.

IV. Coursework

A. THS 500 Senior Seminar

This course addresses the desired outcome through requiring each rabbi-in-formation to write a personal statement of spiritual development. Through reflection and writing, they are asked to describe the ways their spiritual practice translates into the everyday.

V. Co-Curriculars

Rabbis-in-formation can continue to reflect on their spiritual practices in partnership with their spiritual director and spiritual chevrotah.

²⁷David A. Teutsch, “Growing Rabbis,” in *Keeping Faith in Rabbis*, 98-99.

Hazon

Hazon חֲזוֹן or “vision” corresponds to כָּל-לִבְכָּךְ, “with all your heart.”²⁸ Hazon is the pillar oriented towards becoming, looking towards the future arc of spiritual formation beyond ordination. It asks rabbis-in-formation to reflect on their formation, evaluate their practice, and work to make decisions to cultivate their spiritual foundation. Hazon works to help rabbis-in-formation cultivate their spiritual toolkits with texts and practices that resonate with each of them individually.

I. Key Text

- A. “Moses said to God, ‘When I come to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is God’s name?’ what shall I say to them?’ And God said to Moses, ‘אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה/I will be what I will be/I Am that I Am,’ continuing, ‘Thus shall you say to the Israelites, ‘אֶהְיֶה/I will be’ sent me to you.’” Exodus 3:13-14

Hazon, and indeed the entire spiritual curriculum, is rooted in the understanding that spiritual formation never ends. Rabbi Nancy Wiener writes, “In God’s likeness, we, too, can accurately describe ourselves with the same words: “*Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh*.” We are ever in a state of becoming, but always capable of acting with integrity. We are complex, yet unified. Our great challenge is to allow ourselves and encourage others to be who we are and to become who we are meant to be.”²⁹

II. Enduring Understanding

- A. Spiritual formation is a lifelong process of reflection and integration, and it is never finished.

It is absolutely essential that spiritual formation be an intentional focus of the rabbinic curriculum. However, it is a fallacy to think that spiritual formation is a process exclusive to

²⁸Fox, *The Five Books of Moses*.

²⁹Nancy Wiener, “*Hineni – Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh*,” in *Paths of Faithfulness*, 159.

the seminary, and that rabbis are ordained fully formed. Rabbis-in-formation are always in formation, and they will be the best situated to be successful in their ongoing formation if they work towards it intentionally throughout rabbinic school.

III. Essential Questions

- A. What are places of ease in my spirituality? What are my growing edges?
- B. What area of spiritual development will I focus on during my time in rabbinic school?
- C. With what am I wrestling? What tools do I need in order to continue engaging?

IV. Desired Outcomes

- A. Rabbis-in-formation will be able to reflect on their challenges and natural tendencies within spiritual growth and practice.
- B. Rabbis-in-formation will be able to identify a personal spiritual goal or project.
- C. Rabbis-in-formation will be able to describe their personal spiritual toolbox that both grounds them and helps them grow.

Year 1

I. Key Texts

- A. שמע ישראל, “Listen Israel with your mind open.” Sforno on Deuteronomy 6:4

Approaching the first year of the spiritual curriculum requires that rabbis-in-formation be open to the broad ideas of Jewish spirituality that they encounter. Hazon additionally requires that rabbis-in-formation listen nonjudgmentally to themselves as they begin the crucial reflection process that will continue throughout the four years.

II. Essential Question

- A. **What are places of ease in my spirituality? What are my growing edges?**

To best direct the individual rabbi-in-formation towards spiritual formation, they must first come to understand their spiritual disposition and tendencies. In the first year of Hazon, they establish a spiritual starting point against which they can track their progress as the years of the curriculum go on.

III. Desired Outcome

A. Rabbis-in-information will be able to reflect on their challenges and natural tendencies within spiritual growth and practice.

Speaking about divine flow and the spirit, Rabbi Zevit shared this anecdote about Reb Zalman: “He was so concentrated in his davening, and his spiritual director gave him a tap and said, ‘have you tried praying with a smile instead of just chewing on a lemon? Just relax the forehead, if your energy is so tightened and so constrained, are you open to receiving?’ If we just run to try to break into the divine flow, we get rebuffed. If we don’t engage, we fall to the bottom. If we align with the current, the current picks us up.”³⁰ Through the reflective processes within the Spiritual Seminar, rabbis-in-information will consider where they align with the current and are open to receiving, and where that is difficult for them.

IV. Coursework

A. PDE 401 Worship and Ritual

This course addresses the desired outcome as rabbis-in-information reflect on their relationship to prayer and ritual, and through the selected text:

- Comins, Mike. *Making Prayer Real: Leading Spiritual Voices on Why Prayer is Difficult and What to Do About It*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2010.

V. Co-Curriculars

A. Spiritual Seminar

The first year of the Spiritual Seminar asks rabbis-in-information to reflect individually and as a group. The desired outcome is addressed through group spiritual direction, through the assignment of spiritual chevrotah partners, and through the selected text:

- Hoffman, Lawrence A. *The Journey Home: Discovering the Deep Spiritual Wisdom of the Jewish Tradition*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2002.

³⁰Rabbi Shawn Zevit, Zoom interview with author, October 5, 2023.

Year 2

I. Key Text

A. “Ben Hey Hey says: According to the struggle is the reward.” Pirkei Avot 5:23

Spiritual formation is not a passive experience that can simply happen to the rabbi-in-formation. Spirituality must be engaged and wrestled with, and the result will be authentic, integrated spiritual growth.

II. Essential Question

A. What area of spiritual development will I focus on during my time in rabbinic school?

Rabbi Zevit stressed that rabbis-in-formation should ask themselves: “Do these spiritual practices align with the formation I’m after? What center do they hold? What is the value set that goes along with these spiritual practices?”³¹ The second year of the Hazon pillar pushes rabbis-in-formation to take a birds’ eye view of their spiritual development, considering the areas towards which they want to grow and working backwards to cultivate spiritual practices that aim towards that end.

III. Desired Outcome

A. Rabbis-in-formation will be able to identify a personal spiritual goal or project.

The spiritual goal of Hazon is distinct from the spiritual practice project of the year two Spiritual Seminar, but they might be connected. This goal starts not from modality, but from the desired end result: rabbis-in-formation determine an area of spiritual growth they want to pursue, and the practice follows after that to facilitate the growth. There are myriad possibilities for this goal, such as articulating a personal theology, deepening relationship

³¹Rabbi Shawn Zevit, Zoom interview with author, October 5, 2023.

with God, encountering spiritual moments in mundane circumstances, orienting oneself spiritually towards justice, and so on.

IV. Coursework

A. THE 542 Hasidism

THE 542 addresses the desired outcome by continuing to expand the horizons of spiritual development for rabbis-in-formation. Through engaging with key ideas of Hasidism, rabbis-in-formation wrestle with sweeping spiritual questions and can incorporate them into their own development. This course addresses the desired outcome through these selected texts:

- Buber, Martin. *The Origin and Meaning of Hasidism*. Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press International, 1988.
- Green, Arthur and Ariel Evan Mayse, editors. *A New Hasidism: Branches*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2019.

V. Co-Curriculars

A. Spiritual Seminar

While the Spiritual Seminar in the second year emphasizes Zerizut and a spiritual project focused on modalities, it dovetails with the Hazon desired outcome as rabbis-in-formation consider the spiritual growth that is facilitated through spiritual practice. Spiritual chevrotah is crucial as rabbis-in-formation determine what goals they wish to set for their growth. The desired outcome is also addressed through the selected text:

- Sonsino, Rifat. *Six Jewish Spiritual Paths: A Rationalist Looks at Spirituality*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2000.

Year 3

I. Key Text

- A. “One should not procrastinate from one day to the next, saying, ‘I’ll start tomorrow. Tomorrow I’ll pray more attentively, and with the right enthusiasm.’ For a person’s world consists only of the present moment—tomorrow is a different world entirely.” Likutei Moharan 272:1**

By the third year of the spiritual curriculum and the fourth year of the rabbinic program as a whole, feeling overwhelmed and burnt out is a near-universal experience among rabbis-in-

formation.³² With increasing pressures and competing demands of fieldwork and schoolwork, it can be easy for rabbis-in-formation to shelve spiritual formation in favor of more immediate needs. Yet, the Hazon pillar comes to remind them, this is precisely the moment that spiritual formation is most necessary.

II. Essential Question

A. With what am I wrestling? What tools do I need in order to continue engaging?

Reflecting on spirituality as a teacher, Rabbi Braunig shared, “Vulnerability is an important task as a teacher. If we’re asking people to care about something, we have to share, ‘this is why it’s important to me, it’s hitting on this issue and I can’t get to an answer right now.’ If I acknowledge my own skepticism and frustration, then it helps the person who’s hearing it think, ‘oh, I’m not alone in feeling *gevalt!*’”³³ By asking themselves what is challenging them and articulating a response, rabbis-in-formation are both practicing vulnerability and can begin to work towards acquiring the tools they need to overcome their challenges.

III. Desired Outcome

A. Rabbis-in-formation will be able to describe their personal spiritual toolbox that both grounds them and helps them grow.

Rabbis-in-formation are encouraged to check in on their spiritual practices and habits, as well as their personal goal from year two. They should work to discern what is serving them and discard what isn’t. Though ordination may feel distant from this vantage point, year three is a critical time to habituate spiritual practices that will continue to serve rabbis-in-formation well beyond the spiritual curriculum.

³²Various interviews with author, 2022-2024.

³³Rabbi Jordan Braunig, Zoom interview with author, October 5, 2023.

IV. Coursework

A. RAB 511 Mussar

RAB 511 Mussar asks rabbis-in-information to confront the essential question, and facilitates a personal Mussar curriculum to help respond to the answer. This course also addresses the desired outcome through providing key tools to add to the spiritual toolbox, and through these selected texts:

- Morinis, Alan. *Everyday Holiness: The Jewish Spiritual Path of Mussar*. Boston: Trumpeter, 2007.
- Claussen, Geoffrey D. *Modern Musar: Contested Virtues in Jewish Thought*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2022.

V. Co-Curriculars

A. Winter Shabbaton: Hazon

The winter Shabbaton is themed around Hazon. The Shabbaton addresses both the essential question and the desired outcome, focuses on mindfulness and intentional reflection on spiritual challenges. It also does so through the following text:

- Wolpe, David J. *The Healer of Shattered Hearts: A Jewish View of God*. New York: Penguin Books, 1990.

Additionally, spiritual direction and spiritual chevrotah remain vital resources to rabbis-in-information during the third year, particularly as they reflect on the key text and essential question.

Year 4

I. Key Texts

A. “Rabbi Tarfon used to say: It is not your duty to finish the work, but neither are you free to neglect it.” Pirkei Avot 2:16

Though rabbis-in-information are in their final year before ordination, the task of spiritual formation is never finished. Hazon reminds rabbis-in-information to keep engaging with their

spiritual development, viewing their work in seminary as laying a strong foundation for the work they will continue throughout their lives.

II. Essential Question

A. With what am I wrestling? What tools do I need in order to continue engaging?

Rabbi Kerry Olitzky claims, “The daily struggle of faith – rather than its easy resolution – is what makes such a spiritual journey essentially Jewish. People often think that faith should come to us easily, without a struggle, much like we seem to see in other faith communities. Yet Jewish belief does not work that way. Such profound faith grows over time. We reach it in uneven stages. Little by little. We get there step by step. Not always in the same order, nor at the same pace.”³⁴

III. Desired Outcomes

A. Rabbis-in-information will be able to reflect on their challenges and natural tendencies within spiritual growth and practice.

Reflecting on his own spiritual growth and challenges, Rabbi Feigelson affirmed, “Yes, community is important, and yes, the rhythm of Jewish time is important, and creating an environment for my children to be able to learn and experience Torah is important; but if my Judaism isn’t speaking to my inner life and contributing to my flourishing and my ability to be present as a human being in the world, *haMakom Shekhinah*,³⁵ it’s not doing it for me.”³⁶

B. Rabbis-in-information will be able to describe their personal spiritual toolbox that both grounds them and helps them grow.

In the final year of the curriculum and the final year of rabbinic ordination, rabbis-in-formation are already transitioning from learning to living. They are making use of their

³⁴Kerry M. Olitzky, “Toward a Personal Definition of Jewish Spirituality,” in *Paths of Faithfulness*, 116-117.

³⁵The place where God’s presence dwells.

³⁶Rabbi Josh Feigelson, (CEO, Institute for Jewish Spirituality), phone interview with author, September 20, 2023.

spiritual toolbox, and they will for years to come.

IV. Coursework

A. THS 500 Senior Seminar

This course addresses the first desired outcome, “Rabbis-in-formation will be able to reflect on their challenges and natural tendencies within spiritual growth and practice,” through requiring each rabbi-in-formation to write a personal statement of spiritual development. Importantly, Senior Seminar addresses the second desired outcome, “Rabbis-in-formation will be able to describe their personal spiritual toolbox that both grounds them and helps them grow,” through robust discussions of self-care practices and clergy mental health, as well as through these selected texts:

- “Clergy Health Initiative.” Duke Divinity School. Accessed March 11, 2024. <https://clergyreligionresearch.duke.edu/clergy-health-initiative-chi/>.
- Proeschold-Bell, Rae Jean, Chongming Yang, Matthew Toth, Monica Corbitt Rivers, and Kenneth Carder. “Closeness to God Among Those Doing God’s Work: A Spiritual Well-Being Measure for Clergy.” *Journal of Religion and Health* 53 (2014): 878–894, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-013-9682-5>.

Coursework³⁷

Year 1

PDE 402 Teaching Within a Reform Educational Setting

Barbara Dragul, instructor, Cincinnati.

This year-long course is designed to nurture and challenge rabbinical students to realize their potential as teachers. It intentionally integrates educational theory and Jewish practice since each of the students will be in field placements that focus on teaching in multiple contexts. Approximately every fourth class session will provide an opportunity for students to reflect on their experience in the field and relate it to the aspect of education we are studying. This means that the students will also be the teachers.

Self-understanding is essential to teaching, just as it is to chaplaincy and pastoral care. As rabbis-in-formation learn to teach, they learn how they respond to challenges, where they find connection in the process of learning and teaching, and what their Torah is that they wish to share with their students. This course requires observation and reflection of rabbis-in-formation of both themselves and their cohort. Additionally, traditional Jewish texts on learning and teaching are incorporated throughout. The following texts have been selected for the spiritual curriculum:

- hooks, bell. *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope*. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Noddings, Nel. *Caring: A Relational Approach to Ethical and Moral Education*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.
- Palmer, Parker J. *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc. Publishers, 1998.

THE 401 Joining a Conversation in Jewish Theology

Rabbi Jan Katzew, Ph.D., Associate Professor Emeritus of Jewish Thought and Education, Cincinnati.

This is a new course, an elective in Jewish Theology with three principal foci - Holocaust Theology, Feminist Theology and Queer Theology. In the latest version of the desired learning outcomes for rabbinical students at HUC-JIR, Perek Gimmel:

³⁷“Course Offerings By Term and Campus,” Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion Registrar, accessed January 29, 2024, <https://huc.edu/for-students/registrar/>.

Sacred Community Creator and Leader #9c reads: • Demonstrates a commitment to engage opening in conversations with and about God in an effort to develop a personal theology that can be shared with a community. Furthermore, Perek Dalet: Comforter and Challenger #13a states: • Engages in an ongoing process of God wrestling in order to articulate a personal theology that is deeply embedded in Jewish Thought across time. These two desired learning outcomes will guide the form and content of the course, which will culminate in composing a personal theology, a lifetime work in progress. The Holocaust changed Jewish Theology forever and Feminist Theology as well as Queer Theology are now changing the course of Jewish Theology. Rabbis in the 21st century and beyond need to develop our personal theologies in the context of profound and enduring challenges in the Jewish community and beyond. This course is designed to address a compelling personal and professional need for rabbis-in-formation at HUC-JIR.

While they are not identical, theology and spirituality are closely intertwined, and both necessarily address the entire being of the rabbi-in-formation. This course is essential for exposing rabbis-in-formation to theologians and Jewish thought, challenging their preexisting frameworks, and providing them with a foundational vocabulary for Jewish theology and spiritual formation.³⁸ The following texts have been selected for the spiritual curriculum:

- Adler, Rachel. *Engendering Judaism: An Inclusive Theology and Ethics*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1999.
- Borowitz, Eugene B. *Renewing the Covenant: A Theology for the Postmodern Jew*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2010.
- Buber, Martin. *I and Thou*. New York: Scribner, 1955.
- Plaskow, Judith. *Standing Again at Sinai: Judaism from a Feminist Perspective*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990.

PDE 401 Worship and Ritual

Cantor Yvon Shore, M.S.M., Director of Liturgical Arts and Music, Cincinnati.

PDE 401 is designed to develop practical rabbinic skills for all lifecycles. It focuses on comparative studies of historic development, Reform and Traditional liturgies,

³⁸See Neil Gillman, "Writing a Personal Theology," in *Teaching About God and Spirituality: A Resource for Jewish Settings*, ed. Roberta Louis Goodman and Sherry Helene Blumberg (Denver: A.R.E. Publishing, 2001) 174-179.

rabbinic texts, associative terminology, ritual practices and interpersonal relations. All assigned projects are designed for use in congregational and communal settings.

T'filah is a key living laboratory for rabbis-in-formation as they develop their spiritual practices and come to understand their spiritual disposition. Rabbi Ruth Sohn explained that rabbis-in-formation should use t'filah as an opportunity to ask themselves, "What helps deepen your prayer experience? What's getting in the way, when you're leading and when you're not leading?"³⁹ The following text has been selected for the spiritual curriculum:

- Comins, Mike. *Making Prayer Real: Leading Spiritual Voices on Why Prayer is Difficult and What to Do About It*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2010.

Year 2

PDE 404 Human Relations

Rabbi Julie S. Schwartz, Certified Supervisor of Clinical Pastoral Education, Adjunct Associate Professor of Human Relations, Cincinnati.

Human Relations provides the theoretical basis for understanding individual and family behaviors. Students will learn to deal appropriately with common life issues facing congregants, and will practice basic techniques for responding to a variety of pastoral care needs. The course will also include discussion of Jewish teachings and attitudes towards pastoral care.

The holy work of Judaism is done in community and in relationship with one another.

Pastoral care is a critical element of the rabbinate, and interpersonal relationships are crucial for the spiritual development of rabbis-in-formation. In addition to Torah and classical Jewish texts that address relationships, the following text has been selected for the spiritual curriculum:

- Shields, Michele, Allison Kestenbaum, and Laura B. Dunn. "Spiritual AIM and the Work of the Chaplain: A Model for Assessing Spiritual Needs and Outcomes in Relationships." *Palliative and Supportive Care* 13, no. 1 (2015): 75-89. <https://spiritualaim.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Original-Spiritual-AIM-Paper.pdf>

³⁹Rabbi Ruth Sohn, Zoom interview with author, September 27, 2023.

THE 524 Hasidism

Rabbi Haim Rechnitzer, Ph.D., Professor of Jewish Thought, Cincinnati.

This course introduces students to Hasidism, the pietist-mystical movement that arose in Eastern Europe at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Hasidism is one of the most influential and significant movements within modern Judaism. The Hasidic teachings have inspired Jewish artists and thinkers, including Martin Buber, Abraham Joshua Heschel and the Jewish renewal movement. Modern Jewish studies cannot be complete without exposure to the vast source of Hasidic teachings which continues to challenge other Jewish responses to Modernity such as orthodoxy, Reform, or secular Zionism. In this course we will trace some of this history through a close reading of Hasidic texts accompanied by scholarship of Hasidism, general mysticism and trans practices.

Having facility with Hasidic text and thought is a necessary component of studies in Jewish spirituality. This course builds upon the spiritual vocabulary established in the first year of the curriculum, as well as provides new avenues for spiritual practice. The following texts have been selected for the spiritual curriculum:

- Buber, Martin. *The Origin and Meaning of Hasidism*. Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press International, 1988.
- Green, Arthur and Ariel Evan Mayse, editors. *A New Hasidism: Branches*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2019.

Year 3

RAB 511 Mussar

Rabbi Jan Katzew, Ph.D., Associate Professor Emeritus of Jewish Thought and Education, Cincinnati.

Mussar, as much as it is a genre of Jewish ethical literature, is even more a Jewish moral discipline. This combination is perpetually challenging and often problematic. The moral philosopher who claims that it would be reasonable to demand of him or her to be a moral exemplar only when it would be appropriate for a geometer to be a triangle, does not understand or accept the principles of Mussar. Mussar constitutes more than an academic subject, and therefore, you will be assessed in this course in ways that transcend your 'grade.' Mussar is a lifetime curriculum that involves relationships between you and yourself, you and other people and you and God. The efficacy of this course will not ultimately be determined by your ability to translate a sacred text onto a paper, but rather by your ability to translate a sacred text into your life.

Alan Morinis explains that “the starting point to doing Mussar practice is identifying your personal spiritual curriculum.”⁴⁰ Mussar is a vital tool for self-reflection and particularly Jewish spiritual formation. This course provides opportunities for intentional practice following the conclusion of the Spiritual Seminar. The following texts have been selected for the spiritual curriculum:

- Morinis, Alan. *Everyday Holiness: The Jewish Spiritual Path of Mussar*. Boston: Trumpeter, 2007.
- Morinis, Alan. *Every Day, Holy Day: 365 Days of Teachings and Practices from the Jewish Tradition of Mussar*. Boston: Trumpeter, 2010.
- Claussen, Geoffrey D. *Modern Musar: Contested Virtues in Jewish Thought*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2022.

Elective

Rabbis-in-formation are required to select one elective that meets the aims of the spiritual curriculum (see page 93).

Year 4

THS 500 Senior Seminar

Through reading, writing and conversation we will consider the dynamism and increasing variegation of the contemporary rabbinate. Students will have opportunities to interact with multiple rabbinic models including: entrepreneurial, organizational, congregational, academic, educational, and pastoral. Students will be able to practice interview and presentation skills as well as prepare for their transitions from rabbinical school to whatever comes next.

Rabbi Paikin argues, “[The concept that] that spirituality can be articulated and shared... is what distinguishes Jewish spirituality from many other spiritual traditions, particularly the non-religious spirituality that is popular today. Jewish spirituality—while deeply personal—must always have a complementary outward and communal orientation; Judaism is not an

⁴⁰Alan Morinis, *Everyday Holiness: The Jewish Spiritual Path of Mussar* (Boston: Trumpeter, 2007) 260.

ascetic tradition, and Jewish spirituality is not self-help.”⁴¹ Towards this outward orientation, the main focus of Senior Seminar in the context of the spiritual curriculum is writing a personal statement, meeting the first evidence of learning: “Rabbis-in-formation will be able to articulate their spiritual growth in the form of a personal statement prior to ordination.” Ultimately, however, writing a personal statement is merely an exercise that enables the second evidence of learning: “Rabbis-in-formation will be able to demonstrate and describe how they have transformed spiritually at the conclusion of the four-year curriculum.” Senior Seminar additionally considers the role of spirituality in wellbeing as rabbis-in-formation prepare to leave the seminary. The following texts have been selected for the spiritual curriculum:

- “Clergy Health Initiative.” Duke Divinity School. Accessed March 11, 2024. <https://clergyreligionresearch.duke.edu/clergy-health-initiative-chi/>.
- Proeschold-Bell, Rae Jean, Chongming Yang, Matthew Toth, Monica Corbitt Rivers, and Kenneth Carder. “Closeness to God Among Those Doing God’s Work: A Spiritual Well-Being Measure for Clergy.” *Journal of Religion and Health* 53 (2014): 878–894, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-013-9682-5>.
- Ochs, Carol. *Our Lives as Torah: Finding God in Our Stories*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001.

Elective

Rabbis-in-formation are required to select one elective that meets the aims of the spiritual curriculum (see page 93).

⁴¹Paikin, “*L’shem Yichud*,” 2.

Co-Curriculars

Year 1

Spiritual Seminar

The Spiritual Seminar is the cornerstone of the spiritual curriculum. Over the first two years of the curriculum, the Spiritual Seminar meets biweekly to reflect as a cohort of rabbis-in-formation and experiment in a living laboratory of spiritual practice. Elizabeth Lesser writes in *The Seeker's Guide*, “The spiritual quest has always been supported by a community of seekers. We want to travel side by side on our spiritual journeys so that we can tell stories, pass on wisdom, celebrate life, mourn loss, and mark important changes.”⁴² Indeed, Jewish spirituality is rarely a solitary activity; Judaism is lived most fully in community with others. Towards that end, group spiritual direction and spiritual chevrotah are a key component of the spiritual seminar.⁴³ Gila Silverman explains:

“The experience of storytelling invites curiosity — about ourselves and about others. It invites us to see our lives in a larger context, to recognize ourselves as part of a communal and cultural whole. Telling our stories is part of how we form our individual and communal identities, learning to see the emotional, spiritual, and cognitive connections inherent in our experiences. By telling our own stories, we make sense of them. By listening to the stories of others, we connect our lives to theirs, building communities of meaning and opening to new possibilities.”⁴⁴

The Spiritual Seminar invites rabbis-in-formation to learn from one another, underscoring the intertwined spiritual path of the community. They also learn from each other in the spiritual beit midrash, in which rabbis-in-formation study texts from the Torah and Talmud that address spiritual formation alongside their spiritual chevrotah. In the first year of the spiritual

⁴²Elizabeth Lesser, *The Seeker's Guide: Making Your Life a Spiritual Adventure* (New York: Random House, 1999), 390.

⁴³Anne Kline, “Chavurat Ruach (A Fellowship of Spirit): Community for Spiritual Direction” in *Jewish Spiritual Direction: An Innovative Guide from Traditional and Contemporary Sources*, edited by Howard A. Addison and Barbara Eve Breitman (Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2006), 154-168.

⁴⁴Gila Silverman, “A Pedagogy of the 48: Connecting Pirkei Avot, Life, and Learning,” M², January 25, 2023, <https://ieje.org/resources/a-pedagogy-of-the-48-connecting-pirkei-avot-life-and-learning/>. See also Saltzman, “Talmud Torah and Spirituality,” 149.

seminar, there is a particular focus on texts and practices around mindfulness as rabbis-in-formation cultivate awareness at the outset of the spiritual curriculum. This course makes use of “*L’shem Yichud: A Pedagogy for the Sake of Integration*” education guide to frame and set intentions for each class.⁴⁵ The seminar is graded only pass/fail.⁴⁶ The following texts have been selected for the Spiritual Seminar:

- Hoffman, Lawrence A. *The Journey Home: Discovering the Deep Spiritual Wisdom of the Jewish Tradition*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2002.
- Kaplan, Aryeh. *Jewish Meditation: A Practical Guide*. New York: Schocken Books, 1985.
- Matlins, Stuart M., editor. *The Jewish Lights Spirituality Handbook: A Guide to Understanding, Exploring & Living a Spiritual Life*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2001.

Fall Retreat: Shleimut

The first retreat of the spiritual curriculum is held in a camp setting shortly after the High Holy Days. Over the course of two full days and one overnight, rabbis-in-formation are introduced to the spiritual curriculum. They spend time in spiritual chevrotah studying the key texts of each pillar, and as a cohort discover the trajectory and goals of the four-year curriculum. A significant element of the year one retreat is written reflection. Rabbis-in-formation are given two full hours to ponder and answer prompts such as the following:

- Why am I becoming a rabbi?
- What has been my spiritual journey so far?
- How do I understand and relate to God?
- What is my Torah that I want to share?
- What questions do I have?

The cohort will have the chance to read aloud in group spiritual direction after the writing

⁴⁵Paikin, “*L’shem Yichud*.”

⁴⁶“You can’t hear the voice of God if you’re constantly trying to impress or respond to others.” Rabbi Adina Allen, Zoom interview with author, October 13, 2023.

session. More critically, however, the written reflection will be kept as a point of comparison, as rabbis-in-forma-tion will have an identical writing opportunity with the same prompts on the year four retreat.

Year 2

Spiritual Seminar

The second year of the Spiritual Seminar continues some elements of the first year's syllabus, including the spiritual beit midrash in spiritual chevrotah, the pedagogical framework, and the grading system. However, there are two notable changes: first, group spiritual direction is replaced with individual spiritual direction, and moves out of the time spent together in the seminar. Second, while mindfulness is the focus in the first year, the Spiritual Seminar in the second year emphasizes exploration of a wide variety of spiritual modalities.⁴⁷ Modalities that might be practiced in the context of the seminar include:⁴⁸

- *Hitbodedut*, Mindful Awareness: guided meditation, mantra meditation, awareness meditation, spending time in nature, witness writing, journaling, breathwork
- *Talmud Torah*, Study: chevrotah study, *Daf Yomi*⁴⁹, *Parashat HaShavuah*⁵⁰, Mussar study, conducting personal research project, reading for pleasure
- *Mitzvot*, Ritual Practice: traditional and creative *t'filah*, wearing or creating ritual garments, *mikveh* immersion⁵¹, marking Jewish festivals, cultivating Shabbat practice, creating or participating in creative rituals, saying prescribed and spontaneous blessings

⁴⁷“Some people connect spiritually via Talmud Torah... others, emotionally and devotionally, through prayer, song and contemplation; others, through action, via interpersonal relationships, through social justice work, or through acts of gemilut hasadim; still others, iconoclastically, i.e., by seeing through the relative truth of all spiritual paths and holding fast to an inexpressible absolute. Some connect through art and aesthetics; others, through family; and still others, in an appreciation of nature.” “Spiritual Direction,” Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, accessed October 12, 2023, <https://rrc.edu/spiritual-direction/>.

⁴⁸These modality categories are scaffolded from Sonsino's six spiritual paths: transcendence, study, prayer, meditation, ritual, and relationship and good deeds. Rifat Sonsino, *Six Jewish Spiritual Paths: A Rationalist Looks at Spirituality* Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2000). Inspiration was also drawn from Mirel and Werth, *Stepping Stones to Jewish Spiritual Living*; and Lesser, *The Seeker's Guide*.

⁴⁹Study of a daily page of Talmud.

⁵⁰Study of the weekly Torah portion.

⁵¹Ritual bath.

- *G'milut Chasadim*, Acts of Lovingkindness: giving tzedakah, visiting the sick, practicing empathy, deeply listening to others, cultivating holy relationships, working towards social justice causes, developing climate consciousness
- *Y'tzirati 'ut*, Creativity: spiritual writing, crafting, painting, mandala creation, cooking, gardening, singing, playing music, witnessing art and beauty
- *Sh'mirat HaGuf*, Wellness: yoga, stretching, dance, play, movement practice, breathwork, *mikveh* immersion, laying tefillin and wrapping in a tallit, body scan meditation, cultivating rest

While every spiritual modality is explored through a Jewish framework, they are notably not all inherently “Jewish” practices. When he was asked about incorporating non-Jewish spiritual practices, Rabbi Josh Feigelson responded:

“Well, 501(c)(3) organizations aren’t ‘Jewish’ either. In the study of Hasidut, you might come across Rebbe Nachman saying, ‘we’re fully in a place when our *minds* are fully in a place.’ We have access to a mindfulness meditation practice that has been secularized, but there are, of course, indigenous Jewish meditation practices. We have to ask about every practice, ‘does this add value to our experience as Jews or not?’ If it does, then let’s try it. If we push it away, we push away Jews who are already doing it.”⁵²

Rabbi Feigelson’s approach to spiritual practice underpins the Spiritual Seminar’s exploration of modalities: any practice is available to try, with the goal of determining whether it has value to the spiritual experience of the rabbis-in-information. At the beginning of the spring semester, rabbis-in-information select a practice and embark on a month-long project with their chosen practice, while simultaneously continuing exploration within the seminar. The projects are showcased at the spring retreat. The following texts have been selected for the Spiritual Seminar:

- Matlins, Stuart M., editor. *The Jewish Lights Spirituality Handbook: A Guide to Understanding, Exploring & Living a Spiritual Life*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2001.

⁵²Rabbi Josh Feigelson, phone interview with author, September 20, 2023.

- Mirel, James L. and Karen Bonnell Werth. *Stepping Stones to Jewish Spiritual Living: Walking the Path Morning, Noon, and Night*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2000.
- Sonsino, Rifat. *Six Jewish Spiritual Paths: A Rationalist Looks at Spirituality*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2000.

Spring Retreat: Zerizut

The retreat in year two of the spiritual curriculum is held in an immersive camp setting in after the final exam period. Over the course of two full days and one overnight, rabbis-in-formation participate in a ritual showcase. Every element of the retreat – meals, *t'filah*, programs, moments of transition, downtime – is crafted by the rabbis-in-formation, individually or in partnership. Additionally, each rabbi-in-formation shares their practice project on the retreat, whether through presentation, study, or actually facilitating the practice for other members of the cohort. The Zerizut retreat is a container for a holy community, an experimental and experiential opportunity for deep spiritual engagement.

Year 3

Winter Shabbaton: Hazon

While spiritual direction is ongoing, and spiritual chevrotah are encouraged to meet without the Spiritual Seminar, the winter Shabbaton is the only gathering of the full cohort in the co-curricular context of the spiritual curriculum during the third year. The Shabbaton takes place over the course of one day, beginning with Shabbat morning *t'filah* and concluding with Havdalah. In addition to Shabbat rituals such as singing and intentional rest, the Shabbaton includes significant time for reconvening in group spiritual direction. Focused on the Hazon pillar, rabbis-in-formation are asked to reflect on their spiritual formation thus far. Before the Shabbaton, rabbis-in-formation are asked to read the following text:

- Wolpe, David J. *The Healer of Shattered Hearts: A Jewish View of God*. New York: Penguin Books, 1990.

Year 4

Fall Retreat: Shleimut

The final retreat of the spiritual curriculum is directly parallel to the first retreat. It is similarly held in an immersive camp setting shortly after the High Holy Days. Over the course of two full days and one overnight, rabbis-in-information are asked to look back on the spiritual formation, as well as look forward towards their final year prior to ordination. They spend time in spiritual chevrutah and reunite as a cohort for group spiritual direction. Parallel to year one, rabbis-in-information are given two full hours to respond to the same prompts:

- Why am I becoming a rabbi?
- What has been my spiritual journey so far?
- How do I understand and relate to God?
- What is my Torah that I want to share?
- What questions do I have?

After reflecting on their writing as a group, rabbis-in-information then have the chance to compare their responses in year one and in year four. They are encouraged to use these comparisons as a launching point for writing their personal statement in Senior Seminar.

Evidence for Learning

- A. Rabbis-in-information will be able to articulate their spiritual growth in the form of a personal statement prior to ordination.
- B. Rabbis-in-information will be able to demonstrate and describe how they have transformed spiritually at the conclusion of the four-year curriculum.

Electives

One elective is required per year in years 3 and 4, for a total of 2 electives. Listed below is a sample of more than 30 potentially eligible elective courses, all offered at HUC-JIR between Fall 2019 and Spring 2024.⁵³

BHI 568 Faith and Suffering in Jewish Interpretations of Job

Jason Kalman, Ph.D., Gottschalk-Slade Chair in Jewish Intellectual History, Cincinnati.⁵⁴
Offered Spring 2020, Spring 2022, and Spring 2023.

The attempt to understand human suffering has played an essential part in the writings of the great Jewish thinkers. Primarily the discussion has revolved around the seeming contradiction between belief in an omnipotent, just, and compassionate God and a God who allows his creations to suffer. In the Jewish tradition consideration of suffering often masks discussions of the relationship between the people of Israel and their God. The Hebrew Bible offers the first paradigm of this relationship and with it the first extensive discussion of suffering: the Book of Job. Thoughts and ideas about suffering have been presented through analysis of and commentary on the biblical book of Job. This course presents the ways in which the Jewish tradition has confronted human suffering and particularly how these confrontations have been portrayed in interpretations of and commentaries on the book of Job.

BHI 570 Midrash Genesis Rabbah: Cosmology

Rabbi David H. Aaron, Ph.D., Professor of Hebrew Bible and History of Interpretation, Cincinnati. Offered Spring 2020 and Fall 2022.

This course will study Genesis Rabbah's chapters 1 and 8 – general creation of the world and the creation of the human. Many scholars believe there are deep polemics in these chapters related to Christianity, Jewish heretical groups, and other sectaries. We will unlock the mythological material from which the rabbis drew and we will do our best to reconstruct their ideological adversaries. We will also learn advanced skills in reading one of the finest literary achievements of the classical rabbinic period. We will discuss passages in great depth and we will discover that many of the spiritual and ideological concerns of the ancient rabbis were shared by other cultures and by many in contemporary times.

⁵³“Course Offerings By Term and Campus.”

⁵⁴“Faculty and Staff Directory,” HUC-JIR, accessed March 7, 2024 <https://huc.edu/for-faculty-staff/faculty-staff-directory/>.

BIB 592 Special Topics: Bible and Art in Dialogue

Nili Fox, Ph.D., Professor Emerita of Bible, Ancient Near Eastern Studies, and Archaeology, Cincinnati. Offered Fall 2019.

This course focuses on art as a vehicle for interpreting the Bible. We will explore the relationship between the visual and the verbal by utilizing artistic remains from antiquity to better understand the text. In addition, we will examine later (premodern and modern) artistic works on biblical themes, such as those by Rembrandt and Chagall, as visual commentaries.

HIS 592 Special Topic: Ritual Objects and Jewish Identity

Ariel Paige Berger, Ph.D., Sally J. Priesand Post-Doctoral Teaching Fellow, Los Angeles. Offered Fall 2023.

This class is your tour guide for North American Jewish visual culture. The class will explain the founding stories of American Jewish museums as spiritual extensions of Judaism - and literal, physical extensions of synagogues and rabbinical schools. In fact, we will start with the National Federation of Temple Sisterhood's establishment of the Union Museum at HUC Cincinnati in 1914. In this class you will find out why ritual objects were so important to this foremost Reform movement organization, and how American Jews used (and still use) objects as intermediaries between this corporeal world and Judaism's spiritual world.

LIT 503 Creative and Contemporary Liturgies

Rabbi Richard Sarason, Ph.D., The Deutsch Family Professor of Rabbinics and Liturgy, Cincinnati. Offered Summer 2020 (cross-campus) and Summer 2022 (cross-campus).

The purpose of this course is to help you develop your own skills in conceiving, writing, and executing creative liturgies, partly through critically examining the work of others. Issues of religious and aesthetic taste, judgment, style, and liturgical effectiveness will be explored as well as the question of “Jewish authenticity” in the context of contemporary creativity. The assessment vehicle is to create a liturgy yourself for any occasion, and to supply a commentary on that liturgy, sharing your choices and reasoning for every step along the way.

MUS 592 Special Topic: Healing Liturgies and Rituals

Cantor Yvon Shore, M.S.M., Director of Liturgical Arts and Music, Cincinnati. Offered Spring 2023.

Religion is a path to aid in the healing process. When people suffer loss, illness, emotional turmoil they turn to clergy and community for guidance and comfort. What are the Jewish sources for healing? How does ritual allow the conscience to grow and transcend pain? This course will look to traditional and contemporary Jewish texts, music, and rituals that engage with healing.

MUS 592 Special Topic: The Nigun as Spiritual Practice

Gordon Dale, Ph.D., Dr. Jack Gottlieb Scholar in Jewish Music Studies; Assistant Professor of Jewish Musicology, New York. Offered Spring 2024.

“*Nigunim*” refers to a Jewish musical repertoire that is often described as being a particularly potent tool for inducing *dveikut*, an ecstatic state in which the singer or listener clings to the Divine. In this course, we will study the musical repertoire of *nigunim* through historical, anthropological, and musicological lenses. A central component of the course will involve singing *nigunim* and learning the art of leading *nigunim* in one's prayer community. Through this course, we will learn music from several Jewish communities, explore what religious writings on *nigunim* teach us about the soul, and reflect together on best practices for effectively singing and teaching *nigunim*.

PDE 534 Moral Injury

Rabbi Kim Geringer, M.S.W., Clinical Instructor in Clergy Professional Development and Rabbi Nancy Wiener, D.Min., Dr. Paul and Trudy Steinberg Distinguished Professor in Human Relations, New York. Offered Spring 2021 (cross-campus) and Spring 2024.

In the *Mi Shebeirach* we recognize the human need for wholeness and ask God for healing of both body and soul. While Jewish pastoral care has traditionally focused on the spiritual dimensions of physical healing, this course expands that focus to include recovery from moral injury - an ancient phenomenon recently identified in Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans to describe a sense of profound brokenness resulting from violation of one's core moral values. During this semester we will explore the concept of moral injury from Jewish, psychological, and philosophical perspectives. We will study traditional Jewish texts from the Bible through Codes as well as secular and contemporary literature, exploring the variety of ways that such injuries can be understood. We will also examine how the concept of moral injury has been extended to violations that occur in circumstances other than the military, such as racism, misogyny, gender discrimination, political malfeasance, and the corruption of leadership. An important goal of the course is to prepare future clergy to function as witnesses and healers for those suffering moral injury, however derived.

PDE 592 Special Topic: Creating High Holy Day Iyyunim

Rabbi Karyn D. Kedar, instructor. Offered Summer 2021 (cross-campus).

Kavanot and iyyunim are beautiful ways to elucidate a prayer or a liturgical theme through a story, explanation or poetry. In this class we will learn and practice the skill of reading writing and speaking kavanot and iyyunim.

PDE 592 Mindfulness and Jewish Spirituality

Rabbi Julie S. Schwartz, Certified Supervisor of Clinical Pastoral Education, Adjunct Associate Professor of Human Relations, Cincinnati. Offered Summer 2020 (cross-campus).

This is an experiential course during which we will study, practice, and discuss the theory and techniques of mindfulness meditation while also exploring its ties to Jewish texts and ways to integrate it into Jewish traditions and liturgy. Participants will be able to assess the benefit of mindfulness practices as a form of self-care.

PDE 592 Trauma, Resilience and Spirituality

Betsy Stone, Ph.D., instructor. Offered Summer 2020 (cross-campus).

The Summer of 2020 will go down in our personal stories as the summer of loss. No camp, little contact, increased stress. Unemployment through the roof. Food banks, long lines, and personal distancing. What is trauma and how does it impact people? Why are some people more resilient? Are there ways to build or strengthen resilience? Why do some people turn to God and others away from God in a crisis? This class, while not therapy, will look at our current lives and pressures as a way to understand how we serve others while managing ourselves.

PHI 505 Intro to Kabbalah

Rabbi Haim Rechnitzer, Ph.D., Professor of Jewish Thought, Cincinnati. Offered Fall 2019 and Spring 2022 (cross-campus).

In this course we will follow major trends of Jewish mysticism. We will start our journey in the land of Israel with the Merkabah literature and migrate to medieval Germany and its Ashkenaz Hassidism and to Spain and the book of the Zohar Ecstatic Kabbalah of Rabbi Abraham Abulafia. We will relocate back in the Land of Israel with Isaac Luria and his school (16th century) and migrate to Eastern Europe to read from Hasidic “modern Kabbalah” text.

RAB 524 Catastrophe: Lamentations

Rabbi Bernard Mehlman, D.H.L., faculty, New York. Offered Fall 2020 and Fall 2022.

In this course we will read Lamentations and selections from *Eikha Rabbati* in an effort to uncover the meaning of these texts and how they inform our understanding of catastrophe today.

RAB 592 Special Topic: Havruta

Rabbi Jan Katzew, Ph.D., Associate Professor Emeritus of Jewish Thought and Education, Cincinnati. Offered Fall 2019 and Spring 2022.

Havruta is a mode and model of Jewish learning developed over centuries that is predicated on the idea that learning is a social and ethical process. We will study the process and educational philosophy that undergirds havruta, choose texts from

multiple genres of Jewish literature, and finally teach from those texts in a public forum, thereby exemplifying the process of product of havruta study.

RAB 592 Special Topics: Writing Theological ‘Rashi’ to Talmudic Sugiyut

Rabbi Haim Rechnittzer, Ph.D., Professor of Jewish Thought, Cincinnati. Offered Spring 2023 (cross-campus).

In this course we will read selected *Sugiyut* that present philosophical and theological challenges such as questions regarding private and public space, laws regarding neighbors’ relations, Shabbat and its in-home rituals, workers rights and more. We will develop our own theological deliberation and commentaries on these *sugiyut* with the help of Jewish and non-Jewish theologians and explore how this type of reading informs our own theology.

RAB 626 Pirkei Avot

Candice Levy, Ph.D., Visiting Professor, Los Angeles. Offered Spring 2021 and Spring 2023.

As perhaps the most popular rabbinic text, Pirkei Avot has become a source of wisdom and ethics for all Jews. However, the work had a more scholastic function in antiquity, playing an important role in the formation of sages and their disciples. This course will consider the work as a classical rabbinic composition and as a guide for the rabbinate. We will explore the text’s provenance, its reception and interpretation in classical and modern commentaries, including Avot de Rabbi Natan and Maimonides. In addition, we will consider how the foundational rabbinic principles articulated in Avot contributed to the making of a sage in antiquity as well as how it might guide the contemporary rabbi as we contemplate their relevance and implications in the modern world.

RAB 636 Prayer and Prayer

Rabbi Dvora Weisberg, Ph.D., Rabbi Aaron D. Panken Professor of Rabbinics, Los Angeles. Offered Fall 2019 and Fall 2022.

This course explores rabbinic constructions of prayer through the study of rabbinic texts. Topics include: rabbinic views on the origins of Jewish prayer and the emergence of the rabbinic liturgy, *kavana* in prayer, communal and individual prayer, and prayer as a vehicle for communication with the Divine. This course strives to help students integrate the study of rabbinic texts into their professional and personal religious lives.

RTE 507 Reel Theology: An Interdisciplinary Theological Encounter with Contemporary Culture

Rabbi Wendy Zierler, Ph.D., Sigmund Falk Professor of Modern Jewish Literature and Feminist Studies, New York. Offered Fall 2021 and Fall 2023.

What religious or theological function can be performed by popular culture? To what extent can film and contemporary literature provide occasions of transcendence, divine encounter, and religious/ ethical exploration? In this course, we will watch movies and read some popular and/or important works of literature as touchstones for theological and religious conversation. Readings in theology and the study of religion will contextualize and round out our discussions.

RTE 513 Prayer as a Spiritual Practice

Rabbi Mike Comins, instructor. Offered Fall 2020 (cross-campus).

In this course we consider prayers as a spiritual practice, exploring mindfulness, body engagement, nature, poetic reading, easy contemplative practice and *kavana* as prayerful paths to God. In a workshop atmosphere, students will creatively engage traditional and alternative modes of prayer. Throughout, we reflect on the pedagogic principles and strategies that inform an experiential curriculum. Students can expect to deepen their prayer lives, and acquire practical tools to teach tefilla.

RTE 540 Buber and the Way of Man

Rabbi Bernard Mehlman, D.H.L., faculty, New York. Offered Fall 2019 and Fall 2021.

In June of 1947 Martin Buber delivered two lectures in Bentveld, the Netherlands. Those lectures were printed in German in 1948 with the title, *Der Weg des Menschen nach der chassidischen Lehre*. They were translated into English in 1950 as: *The Way of Man According to the Teaching of Hasidism*. Rabbi Bernard H. Mehlman and Dr. Gabriel E. Padawer have prepared a new translation of this work, the first in more than 60 years. It was recently published by Jewish Lights with the title, *The Way of Man According to Hasidic Teaching*. This course will use this new translation. Our aim will be to analyze the Hasidic stories and explore Buber's interpretive text to better understand the ideas, meaning, and theology articulated in his work. In a seminar setting we will attempt to deepen our understanding of Martin Buber's teaching and draw meaning for our own religious search.

RTE 556 Jewish Mysticism

Rabbi Pinchas Giller, Ph.D., Visiting Professor. Los Angeles. Offered Fall 2023.

Jewish Mysticism, commonly referred to as Kabbalah, is the product of thousands of years of esoteric speculation, revelatory experience, scholasticism, pietism and risk. This course will analyze the role of mysticism in Jewish history through analysis of the major theological ideas of classical Kabbalah. The second half of the course will

carry the narrative into the world of Hasidism. These traditions will be examined in terms of its historical development, its relationship to mystical experiences and its sacred literature. Attention will also be paid to the relationship of Kabbalah to other kinds of mysticism, in line with general issues in the study of religious mysticism. In the second part of the course we will engage in learning primary Chassidic teachings of Rebbes that stem from the conception of the movement till our generation. We will engage in close textual analysis of primary sources as a means of understanding the evolution of the Chassidic vocabulary and library. We will encounter the teachings of core voices in the Chassidic movement and explore the essence of their theology and spiritual legacy.

RTE 556 First Words: Readings in Jewish Mystical and Hasidic Literature

Rabbi Jonathan Slater, D.Min., instructor, New York. Offered Spring 2021.

Jewish teachers often state their case in their teachings on the opening of *Bereshit*. We will contextualize our study in mindfulness meditation, and turn our attention to the opening passages of the *Zohar*, the *Tikkunei Zohar*, and several well-known and central Hasidic teachers (including Me'or Eynayim, Kedushat Levi, Ma'or Vashemesh, Sefat Emet). Students are expected to attend all class sessions, and participate fully in class discussions (excuses for health or interviews accepted -- a review of the class recording and a one-page reflection will be accepted instead). Students will prepare the texts for each class session beforehand, to allow for a fuller exploration of the issues and orientation of the teaching in class. A three-page reflection on the experience of the class and one's personal learning will be the final assignment.

RTE 564 Wise Activism

Rabbi Jonathan Slater, D.Min., instructor, New York. Offered Spring 2020 and Spring 2024 (cross-campus).

There is nothing so natural in the human experience as the rhythm of the breath: inhalation, exhalation, inhalation, exhalation. This is echoed in the filling and emptying of the chambers of the heart and, but also in the waxing and waning of the moon; in the changing of the seasons; in the upwelling and submergence of tectonic plates on the earth's surface. This rhythm is present in human culture, too. We recognize it in the activity of the week and the rest of Shabbat; in the dynamism of the day and its prayers, and the slowing experienced at night; in the emergence of creative communities around the world, and their decline, to only see new centers of life and creativity appear. Why should our activism be any different? In our time together, we will investigate the place of contemplative practice in our work for social justice and a vibrant Jewish community. Our direct experience through practice will

be linked to contemporary articles on contemplation and activism, as well as classical sources (primarily from the Hasidic corpus).

RTE 592 Special Topic: Creativity as Spiritual Practice: Artistic Expression of HHD Texts

Noah Aronson, instructor. Offered Summer 2021 (cross-campus).

This course will involve experiential learning in a workshop setting, with weekly creative assignments utilizing artistic forms of interest to each student (e.g., music/writing/drawing/poetry/movement/dance/audio-visual media, etc.).

RTE 592 Special Topic: Liberation Theology

Rabbi Joseph Skloot, Ph.D., Rabbi Aaron D. Panken Assistant Professor of Modern Jewish Intellectual History, New York. Offered Fall 2020.

For at least two millennia, the memory of the Exodus has shaped Jews' experience of and response to injustice and oppression. In the mid-twentieth century, Christians—especially those in the post-colonial developing world and in minority communities in the US—began to reinvest the story of the Exodus with theological meaning. Inspired by Marxism's concept of class struggle, Jesus' hostility to entrenched power, these theologians fashioned a movement known as Liberation Theology that links exegesis with activism. In response, Jews began to reinterpret the Exodus story in light of contemporary social struggles as well. This course explores the nexus of the Book of Exodus, Christian Liberation Theology and its Jewish responses. The first third of the course will focus on interpreting the Book of Exodus in light of classical Jewish commentaries, including the Haggadah. The second third of the course will focus on reading key works in Liberation Theology including those by Martin Luther King Jr., Gustavo Gutierrez, Rosemary Ruether. The final third of the course will focus on contemporary Jewish thinkers influenced by Liberation Theology including Abraham Joshua Heschel, Arthur Waskow and Michael Walzer. We will also consider popular conceptions of social justice within the Reform movement today.

RTE 592 Special Topic: Making Prayer a Personal Practice

Rabbi Jonathan Slater, D.Min., instructor, New York. Offered Spring 2022.

Prayer is a native, spontaneous, and necessary element of being human. So, why is it so difficult? What holds us back from prayer and what moves us to pray? In our time together we will investigate a variety of orientations to and modes of prayer. We will read poetry, study Hasidic texts and utilize contemporary prayer offerings via the "Open My Heart: Living Jewish Prayer" podcast.

RTE 592 Special Topics: Sensing the Spirit, Hearing the Call: Spiritual Direction in Jewish Sources

Rabbi Jonathan Slater, D.Min., instructor, New York. Offered Spring 2023 (cross-campus).

Engaging in spiritual direction can help us clarify our sense of God's role in our lives, deepening our understanding of what we are called to do and be as individuals and clergy. In this course, we cultivate our capacity to sense the movement of divinity in us through mindfulness meditation practice. Mindfulness meditation helps to connect us directly to our experience in the moment, freeing us to direct our attention where we choose, supporting our capacity for sacred listening. We also give attention to texts which reflect the Jewish sources of this practice and inspire us in our lives.

RTE 592 Special Topic: Spiritual Writing

Rabbi Vanessa Ochs, Ph.D., Visiting Professor. Offered Fall 2023 (cross-campus).

When engaged in “spiritual writing,” one accesses thoughts, feelings, and wisdom in distinctive ways. This class has three parts: 1. Reading and responding to brief samples of spiritual writing from diverse traditions and genres 2. Writing briefly each day for oneself, writing in response to weekly prompts and sharing writing in a supportive community 3. Learning the craft of how to appropriately share personal writing with one's community and the broader public. Authors we will look at may include Rilke, Oliver Sacks, Anne Lamott, Louise Gluck, Erika Meitner, Harvey Shapiro, John L'Heureux, Mary Oliver, Rachel Naomi Remen, Allison Bechdel, and Octavio Solis.

THE 511 American Jewish Theology

Rabbi David Ellenson, Ph.D., z"l, I.H. and Anna Grancell Professor Emeritus of Jewish Religious Thought, New York and Rabbi Michael Marmur, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Jewish Theology, Jerusalem. Offered Spring 2021 (cross-campus).

This course aims to review some of the key themes which have characterized American Jewish Thought over the last eighty years. David Ellenson and Michael Marmur have recently published an anthology entitled *Jewish Thought Since 1934: Writings on Identity, Engagement and Belief*, and this work will serve as the basis for the course - what picture of American Judaism emerges from these excerpts? And what else ought to be included to capture the depth and diversity of the American Jewish conversation?

THE 625 Approaches to Pain and Suffering

Rabbi Rachel Adler, Ph.D., Rabbi David Ellenson Professor Emerita of Jewish Religious Thought, Professor Emerita of Modern Jewish Thought, Los Angeles. Offered Fall 2021 (cross-campus).

Using texts from diverse historical periods, students examine how Jewish tradition has used narrative, poetry, theology, law, and liturgy to confront and frame the universal human experiences of pain, suffering, and loss. Also included are phenomenologies and theoretical frameworks drawn from philosophy and cultural criticism, anthropology, and psychology.

Conclusion

At the end of January, after a year and a half of working towards my capstone and after nearly four years of being immersed in questions around spiritual formation, I conducted my final interview. In reality, Rabbi David Adelson, the Dean of the New York campus of HUC-JIR, and I were interviewing each other: I was interviewing him for my capstone, and he was interviewing me for the ongoing curriculum review process. Rabbi Adelson has been asked to write a proposal on “the integration of spiritual life and leadership skills into a holistic, intentional structure of clergy formation.”¹ It soon became apparent in our conversation that we had independently arrived at the same conclusion: the pieces are already in place for a formal spiritual curriculum at HUC-JIR. With some scaffolding and intentional framing, these pieces can be pulled together to form a meaningful and integrated spiritual program.

When our conversation turned to outcomes and evidence for learning, Rabbi Adelson and I started bouncing ideas off each other, as neither of us had then decided what those measurables should look like in the (my theoretical, his soon-to-be implemented) spiritual curriculum. We talked about the idea of Level I competencies and Level II competencies. I was uncomfortable with a competency such as “students will be able to teach from their personal theology,” as I felt it centered the rabbinic skill over the vitally important spiritual grounding of the rabbi. Thus emerged the concept of Level I and Level II: Level I is the spiritual end (i.e., “students will be able to articulate their personal theology”), while Level II translates the Level I competency into becoming a better rabbinic leader.² At that moment,

¹E-mail communication, October 25, 2023.

²Rabbi David Adelson (Dean, New York campus of HUC-JIR), Zoom interview with author, January 29, 2024.

we both stopped talking and each furiously wrote down notes on our respective sides of the Zoom screen.

As I write this, I am almost exactly two and a half months away from rabbinic ordination. I am thrilled at the possibility of my capstone impacting, even if just in some small way, future rabbis-in-formation who pass through HUC-JIR. Yet, even if the curriculum continues in the same way as it has since Dr. Mihaly's Task Force in 1988, I know that my own spirituality has been impacted by the work I have put into this capstone.

I remembered recently an interaction I had with a classmate during our Year-in-Israel. She mentioned off-handedly to me, "I skip *t'filah* to go to yoga class because I like to pray." I don't remember if I responded to her, but I do remember being deeply confused and frustrated by her comment. I thought that perhaps she wasn't trying hard enough – she just needed to commit to giving our liturgy a fair chance. Or, worse, maybe she wasn't cut out for rabbinic school if that was her attitude to prayer. Of course, I only now realize that I was projecting onto my classmate spiritual challenges I felt in myself. I thought if I kept pushing myself to access God through prayer, it would one day finally happen. I worried that because my moments of spirituality didn't occur during *t'filah*, my own spirituality was not Jewish and I was fundamentally unfit for the rabbinate.

I now understand that traditional worship cannot be our only place of spiritual engagement. We each must have other outlets for spirituality, particularly when *t'filah* is not providing us with the spiritual nourishment that we need. I know that I'll keep trying in prayer, because as Eugene Borowitz illustrates, "that it does not happen every time does not mean it never happens. Though I have no special gift for spirituality, something does occasionally happen. Saying my *motzi* amid the city rush, I sometimes again fleetingly but

truly touch the Ultimate, reaffirming in this instant what I believe and must yet do.”³ We never know when we will encounter God, but I have come to understand that God might meet us halfway, even outside the sanctuary.

Beit Hillel rules in Mishnah Berakhot 1:3, “Every person recites Shema as they are: כְּדֶרֶכוֹ קוֹרֵא אֶת־שְׁמָא.” כְּדֶרֶכוֹ can translate to “on his path,” as Beit Hillel connects to the phrase in the V’ahavta, וּבְלֶכְתְּךָ בַּדֶּרֶךְ, “and when you are walking on the way.”⁴ They interpret בַּדֶּרֶךְ broadly, arguing that a person should say the Shema wherever they are on their path, sitting or standing. However, דֶּרֶךְ doesn’t just refer to a physical path; it also means manner, method, secular occupation, or way. We use the word דֶּרֶךְ when we talk about how we engage with the world.

We each say the Shema, engaging with God, wherever we are on our personal path of spiritual formation. We connect spiritually as we are in our own thoughts and actions and emotions and experiences, as we are in totality: לֵב, נֶפֶשׁ, and מְאֹד. Each of us is on our own path, and as we are reminded, the Torah is not in heaven: “No, the thing is very close to you, in your mouth and in your heart, to observe it.”⁵ It is within us, and each rabbi-in-formation can fully integrate it into their own process of becoming. It is in our mouths and in our hearts.

³Eugene B. Borowitz, *Renewing the Covenant: A Theology for the Postmodern Jew* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2010), 111-112.

⁴Deuteronomy 6:7.

⁵Deuteronomy 30:14.

Bibliography

- Adler, Rachel. *Engendering Judaism: An Inclusive Theology and Ethics*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1999.
- ALEPH Ordination Program: The Seminary for the Renewal of Judaism. "Course Catalog, Academic Year 2023-2024." ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal, October 2023.
- Barenblat, Rachel. "In the Right Direction: Hashpaah and Spiritual Life." In *Keeping Faith in Rabbis: A Community Conversation on Rabbinical Education*, edited by Haim Herring and Ellie Roscher, 19-23. Avenida Books, 2014.
- Belzer, Tobin and Gila Silverman. "Spiritual Direction & Jewish Spiritual Director Training: Summative Evaluation." The Spirituality Initiative, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, January 2019.
- Berman, Loren. "A Mussar Approach to Mindfulness (and the solution to today's polarization): Hitlamdut (התלמדות)." Sefaria. Accessed March 2, 2024.
<https://www.sefaria.org/sheets/110807.67>.
- Borowitz, Eugene B. "Faith and Method in Modern Jewish Theology." In *Studies in the Meaning of Judaism (JPS Scholar of Distinction Series)*, 69-84. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2002.
- Borowitz, Eugene B. *Renewing the Covenant: A Theology for the Postmodern Jew*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2010.
- Brookfield, Stephen D. *The Skillful Teacher: On Technique, Trust, and Responsiveness in the Classroom*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1990.
- Brookfield, Stephen D. *Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning: A Comprehensive Analysis of Principles and Effective Practices*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1986.
- Buber, Martin. *I and Thou*. New York: Scribner, 1955.
- Buber, Martin. *The Origin and Meaning of Hasidism*. Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press International, 1988.
- Chazan, Barry. "Jewish Education and Moral Development." In *Moral Development, Moral Education, and Kohlberg: Basic Issues in Philosophy, Psychology, Religion, and Education*, edited by Brenda Munsey, 298-325. Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1980.
- Chein, Chanie. "Insourcing, Reflection, and the 'Long, Short Path.'" M², January 25, 2023.
<https://ieje.org/resources/insourcing-reflection-and-the-long-short-path/>.

- Chertok, Fern and Leonard Saxe. "Envisioning the Future of Reform Clergy Education." Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, Brandeis University, 2015.
- "Cincinnati Campus Checklist." Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, author's personal records. Revised May 2, 2023.
- Cincinnati Campus Executive Vice-President, Rabbinic Curriculum, 1986-1988. Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion Records. MS-20/Box J6-5 and J6-6. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.
- Claussen, Geoffrey D. *Modern Musar: Contested Virtues in Jewish Thought*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2022.
- "Clergy Health Initiative." Duke Divinity School. Accessed March 11, 2024. <https://clergyreligionresearch.duke.edu/clergy-health-initiative-chi/>.
- "Clergy Studio." Jewish Studio Project. Accessed October 15, 2023. <https://www.jewishstudioproject.org/clergy-studio>.
- Cohen Anisfeld, Sharon, et al. "What is Ours To Do?: Hebrew College Strategic Plan 2018-2021." Hebrew College. Updated November 5, 2020.
- Cohen, Martin S., Tamar Elad-Appelbaum, and Gordon Tucker. *Pirkei Avot Lev Shalem: The Wisdom of Our Sages*. Edited and translated by Martin S. Cohen. New York: The Rabbinical Assembly, 2018.
- Comins, Mike. *Making Prayer Real: Leading Spiritual Voices on Why Prayer is Difficult and What to Do About It*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2010.
- "Course Offerings by Term and Campus." Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Accessed January 29, 2024. <https://huc.edu/for-students/registrar/>.
- "The Covenant Grants: Spiritual Formation in Rabbinic Education." The Covenant Foundation, January 5, 2023. <https://covenantfn.org/grant/spiritual-formation-in-rabbinic-education-2/>.
- "The Covenant Grants." The Covenant Foundation. Accessed October 16, 2023. <https://covenantfn.org/grants/listing/>.
- "CPE Students." Association for Clinical Pastoral Education. Accessed November 29, 2023. <https://acpe.edu/education/cpe-students>.
- Cronin, Joan. "Implications for Adult Religious Education." In *Faith Development in the Adult Life Cycle*, edited by Kenneth Stokes, 291-296. New York: W.H. Sadlier, 1982.
- "Curriculum Overview." Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, Reconstructing Judaism. Accessed October 12, 2023. <https://rrc.edu/curriculum-overview/>.

- “Curriculum: Become a Rabbi.” Hebrew College. Accessed October 16, 2023.
<https://hebrewcollege.edu/graduate-leadership-programs/become-a-rabbi/curriculum/>.
- Danan, Julie Hilton. “The ALEPH Program: An Alternative Path to the Rabbinat.” In *Keeping Faith in Rabbis: A Community Conversation on Rabbinical Education*, edited by Haim Herring and Ellie Roscher, 244-255. Avenida Books, 2014.
- Dewey, John. *Experience and Education*. New York: Kappa Delta Pi, 1938.
- Driver, Samuel Rolles, Francis Brown, and Charles Augustus Briggs. *The Brown, Driver, Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. Accessed on Sefaria, February 8, 2024.
<https://www.sefaria.org/BDB>.
- “Faculty and Staff Directory.” Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Accessed March 7, 2024. <https://huc.edu/for-faculty-staff/faculty-staff-directory/>.
- Foster, Charles R., Lisa E. Dahill, Lawrence A. Golemon, and Barbara Wang Tolentino. *Educating Clergy: Teaching Practices and Pastoral Imagination*. Stanford: Jossey-Bass, 2005.
- Fowler, James. *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981.
- Fox, Everett. *The Five Books of Moses*. New York: Schocken Books, 1995. Accessed on Sefaria, February 19, 2024.
https://www.sefaria.org/The_Five_Books_of_Moses,_by_Everett_Fox.
- Gillman, Neil. “Writing a Personal Theology.” In *Teaching About God and Spirituality: A Resource for Jewish Settings*, edited by Roberta Louis Goodman and Sherry Helene Blumberg, 174-179. Denver: A.R.E. Publishing, 2001.
- Green, Arthur and Ariel Evan Mayse, editors. *A New Hasidism: Branches*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2019.
- “Hebrew College Receives \$150,000 Covenant Grant to Foster Spiritual Leadership.” *Hebrew College Community Blog*, January 17, 2023. <https://hebrewcollege.edu/blog/hebrew-college-receives-150000-covenant-grant-to-foster-spiritual-leadership/>.
- Heschel, Abraham Joshua. *Between God and Man: An Interpretation of Judaism*. New York: Free Press, 1959.
- Hoffman, Lawrence A. *The Journey Home: Discovering the Deep Spiritual Wisdom of the Jewish Tradition*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2002.
- Holy Sparks: Celebrating 50 Years of Women in the Rabbinat*. Skirball Museum, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati. May 19-September 4, 2022.
<https://jewishartsalon.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/e2808ehuc.edusitesdefaultfilesholy-spark-live-r19.pdf>.

- hooks, bell. *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope*. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Hough, Holly, Rae Jean Proeschold-Bell, Xin Liu, Carl Weisner, Elizabeth L. Turner, and Jia Yao. "Relationships between Sabbath Observance and Mental, Physical, and Spiritual Health in Clergy." *Pastoral Psychology* 68 (2019): 171–193, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11089-018-0838-9>.
- HUC Catalogs 1985-1988, 1990-1993, 1997-1999, 2001-2004. Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion Records. MS-20/Record Group C. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.
- "HUC-CN Spiritual Direction Information Packet." Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, June 6, 2020.
- "IJS Impact Report 2023." Institute for Jewish Spirituality, October 24, 2023. <https://www.jewishspirituality.org/about/impact-report-2023/>.
- "IJS Strategic Plan 2022-2025." Institute for Jewish Spirituality. Accessed September 21, 2023. <https://www.jewishspirituality.org/about/ijs-strategic-plan-2022-2025/>.
- "Institute for Jewish Spirituality." Institute for Jewish Spirituality. Accessed September 15, 2023. <https://www.jewishspirituality.org/>
- Jastrow, Marcus. *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi and Midrashic Literature*. Accessed on Sefaria, February 19, 2024. <https://www.sefaria.org/Jastrow>.
- The JPS Tanakh: Gender-Sensitive Edition*. Edited by David E. S. Stein. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2023.
- Kanter, Sammy. "Spin, Sweat, and Shakharit?: Where the Spirituality of America's Health and Wellness Culture Meets Judaism." Rabbinic thesis, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, 2023.
- Kaplan, Aryeh. *Jewish Meditation: A Practical Guide*. New York: Schocken Books, 1985.
- Keyes, Corey L. M. "The Mental Health Continuum: From Languishing to Flourishing in Life." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, vol. 43, no. 2 (2002): 207–22. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3090197>.
- Kline, Anne. "Chavurat Ruach (A Fellowship of Spirit): Community for Spiritual Direction." In *Jewish Spiritual Direction: An Innovative Guide from Traditional and Contemporary Sources*, edited by Howard A. Addison and Barbara Eve Breitman, 154-168. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2006.
- Knowles, Malcolm S., Richard A. Swanson, and Elwood F. Holton III. *The Adult Learner: The Definitive Classic in Adult Education and Human Resource Development*. New York: Routledge, 2012.

- Kustanowitz, Esther D. "Forging connections drives Covenant's new exec." *eJewishPhilanthropy*, January 26, 2022. <https://ejewishphilanthropy.com/forging-connections-drives-covenants-new-exec/>.
- Lesser, Elizabeth. *The Seeker's Guide: Making Your Life a Spiritual Adventure*. New York: Random House, 1999.
- Macdonald, James B. "A Look At the Kohlberg Curriculum Framework for Moral Education." In *Moral Development, Moral Education, and Kohlberg: Basic Issues in Philosophy, Psychology, Religion, and Education*, edited by Brenda Munsey, 381-400. Birmingham: Religious Education Press, 1980.
- Matlins, Stuart M., editor. *The Jewish Lights Spirituality Handbook: A Guide to Understanding, Exploring & Living a Spiritual Life*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2001.
- Meyer, Michael A. *Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion: A Centennial History, 1875-1975*. Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1976.
- Milstein, Glen, Celia F. Hybels, and Rae Jean Proeschold-Bell. "A prospective study of clergy spiritual well-being, depressive symptoms, and occupational distress." *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality* 12 no.4 (2019): 409-416, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/rel0000252>
- Mirel, James L. and Karen Bonnell Werth. *Stepping Stones to Jewish Spiritual Living: Walking the Path Morning, Noon, and Night*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2000.
- Morinis, Alan. *Every Day, Holy Day: 365 Days of Teachings and Practices from the Jewish Tradition of Mussar*. Boston: Trumpeter, 2010.
- Morinis, Alan. *Everyday Holiness: The Jewish Spiritual Path of Mussar*. Boston: Trumpeter, 2007.
- "New to Soul." SoulCycle. Accessed March 3, 2023. <https://www.soul-cycle.com/new-to-soul/>.
- Nortey, Justin and Michael Rotolo. "How the Pandemic Has Affected Attendance at U.S. Religious Services." *Pew Research Center*, March 28, 2023. <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2023/03/28/how-the-pandemic-has-affected-attendance-at-u-s-religious-services/>.
- Ochs, Carol. "Jewish Spirituality: The Way of Love." In *Paths of Faithfulness: Personal Essays on Jewish Spirituality*, edited by Carol Ochs, Kerry M. Olitzky, and Joshua Saltzman, 103-112. Hoboken: KTAV Publishing House, 1997.
- Ochs, Carol. *Our Lives as Torah: Finding God in Our Stories*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001.
- Olitzky, Kerry M. "Toward a Personal Definition of Jewish Spirituality." In *Paths of Faithfulness: Personal Essays on Jewish Spirituality*, edited by Carol Ochs, Kerry M. Olitzky, and Joshua Saltzman, 113-121. Hoboken: KTAV Publishing House, 1997.

- “Our Approach.” ALEPH Ordination Program, ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal. Accessed November 6, 2023. <https://aleph.org/aop/our-approach/>.
- “Our Mission, Vision, and Values.” Institute for Jewish Spirituality. Accessed September 15, 2023. <https://www.jewishspirituality.org/about/our-vision-mission-and-values/>.
- “Our Work.” Jewish Studio Project. Accessed October 15, 2023. <https://www.jewishstudioproject.org/our-work>.
- Paikin, Jesse. “*L’shem Yichud*: A Pedagogy For the Sake of Integration.” M², January 25, 2023. <https://ieje.org/resources/lshem-yichud-a-pedagogy-for-the-sake-of-integration/>
- Palmer, Parker J. *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher’s Life*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc. Publishers, 1998.
- Peters, R. S. “Moral Development and Moral Learning.” *The Monist* 58, no. 4 (1974): 541–67. Accessed March 5, 2024. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27902386>.
- Pew Research Center. “Jewish Americans in 2020.” *Pew Research Center*, May 11, 2021. <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2021/05/11/jewish-americans-in-2020/>.
- Pew Research Center. “U.S. Public Becoming Less Religious.” *Pew Research Center*, November 3, 2015. <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2015/11/03/u-s-public-becoming-less-religious/>.
- Phillips, William. “Faith Development and Theological Education.” In *Faith Development in the Adult Life Cycle*, edited by Kenneth Stokes, 297-313. New York: W.H. Sadlier, 1982.
- Plaskow, Judith. *Standing Again at Sinai: Judaism from a Feminist Perspective*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990.
- Proeschold-Bell, Rae Jean, Chongming Yang, Matthew Toth, Monica Corbitt Rivers, and Kenneth Carder. “Closeness to God Among Those Doing God’s Work: A Spiritual Well-Being Measure for Clergy.” *Journal of Religion and Health* 53 (2014): 878–894, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-013-9682-5>.
- Prouser, Ora Horn. “Rabbinic Education: More than an Academic Exercise.” In *Keeping Faith in Rabbis: A Community Conversation on Rabbinical Education*, edited by Haim Herring and Ellie Roscher, 208-215. Avenida Books, 2014.
- “Rabbinical Course of Study.” Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. Accessed May 8, 2023. <https://huc.edu/schools-programs/rabbinical-school/rabinnical-ordination-and-master-of-arts-in-hebrew-letters-literature/rabbinical-school-course-of-study/>.
- Raphael, Simcha et al. “History of the ALEPH Ordination Program.” AELPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal. Accessed November 6, 2023. <https://aleph.org/aop/history-of-the-aleph-ordination-program/>.

- Riemer, Jack and Nathaniel Stampfer. "Writing an Ethical Will." In *The Jewish Lights Spirituality Handbook: A Guide to Understanding, Exploring & Living a Spiritual Life*, edited by Stuart M. Matlins. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2001, 368-377.
- "Rizz crowned Oxford Word of the Year 2023." Oxford University Press, December 4, 2023. <https://corp.oup.com/news/rizz-crowned-oxford-word-of-the-year-2023/>.
- Saltzman, Joshua. "Talmud Torah and Spirituality: A Postmodern Perspective." In *Paths of Faithfulness: Personal Essays on Jewish Spirituality*, edited by Carol Ochs, Kerry M Olitzky, and Joshua Saltzman. Hoboken: KTAV Publishing House, 1997, 137-156.
- Scholem, Gershom. "Three Types of Jewish Piety." *Ariel* 32, (1973): 5-24.
- Shields, Michele, Allison Kestenbaum, and Laura B. Dunn. "Spiritual AIM and the Work of the Chaplain: A Model for Assessing Spiritual Needs and Outcomes in Relationships." *Palliative and Supportive Care* 13, no. 1 (2015): 75-89. <https://spiritualaim.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Original-Spiritual-AIM-Paper.pdf>
- Silverman, Gila. "A Pedagogy of the 48: Connecting Pirkei Avot, Life, and Learning." M², January 25, 2023. <https://ieje.org/resources/a-pedagogy-of-the-48-connecting-pirkei-avot-life-and-learning/>.
- Sonsino, Rifat. *Six Jewish Spiritual Paths: A Rationalist Looks at Spirituality*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2000.
- "Spiritual Direction." Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, Reconstructing Judaism. Accessed October 12, 2023. <https://rrc.edu/spiritual-direction/>.
- "Spiritual Mentoring." The Jewish Theological Seminary. Accessed December 4, 2023. <https://www.jtsa.edu/spiritual-mentoring/>.
- Taylor, Charles. *The Ethics of Authenticity*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992.
- Teutsch, David A. "Growing Rabbis." In *Keeping Faith in Rabbis: A Community Conversation on Rabbinical Education*, edited by Haim Herring and Ellie Roscher, 98-102. Avenida Books, 2014.
- Tickton Schuster, Diane. *Jewish Lives, Jewish Learning: Adult Jewish Learning in Theory and Practice*. Millburn: Behrman House Publishing, 1999.
- "2021-2022 Academic Catalog." Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion Registrar, Cincinnati Campus. Accessed May 8, 2023. https://huc.edu/wp-content/uploads/Cincinnati_Academic_Catalog_2021-2022.pdf.pdf.
- Werczberger, Rachel. *Jews in the Age of Authenticity: Jewish Spiritual Renewal in Israel*. New York: Peter Lang, 2017.

- “What Are Jewish Spiritual Practices?” Institute for Jewish Spirituality. Accessed September 15, 2023. <https://www.jewishspirituality.org/about/what-are-jewish-spiritual-practices/>.
- “Words of the Year.” Merriam-Webster, Incorporated. Accessed November 27, 2023. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-of-the-year/see-all>.
- Wiener, Nancy. “*Hineni – Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh*.” In *Paths of Faithfulness: Personal Essays on Jewish Spirituality*, edited by Carol Ochs, Kerry M Olitzky, and Joshua Saltzman. Hoboken: KTAV Publishing House, 1997, 157-163.
- Wiener, Shoama Harris. “Spiritual Types: One Size Doesn’t Fit All.” In *Jewish Spiritual Direction: An Innovative Guide from Traditional and Contemporary Sources*, edited by Howard A. Addison and Barbara Eve Breitman. Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2006, 115-130.
- Wolpe, David J. *The Healer of Shattered Hearts: A Jewish View of God*. New York: Penguin Books, 1990.
- “Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies.” American Jewish University. Accessed October 4, 2023. <https://www.aju.edu/ziegler-school-rabbinic-studies>.
- Zohar, Danah and Ian Marshall. *SQ: Connecting with Our Spiritual Intelligence*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2000.