

30th Annual

TORATHON

2018

"30 Years of Jewish Learning"



*This year we
are celebrating the
30th Anniversary of Torathon
in our local Jewish community.*

*Following registration we will join together for
Havdalah and a joyous "Melaveh Malka," the
ushering out of the Shabbat and the beginning of
a new week with song and celebration. From 7pm to
10pm you can choose from many one hour classes,
lectures, discussions or workshops led by the region's
distinguished rabbis, cantors, Jewish educators, Jewish
community and organizational leaders.
A dessert reception and social hour will close the evening.*

Saturday, November 17, 2018

5:30 P.M. – 10:00 P.M.

Registration begins

Refreshments to follow.

CONGREGATION BETH ISRAEL

15 Jamesbury Drive, Worcester, MA

Purchase Torathon tickets
and view classes online at
jewishcentralmass.org/torathon



Sponsored by
Jewish Federation
OF CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS

THE STRENGTH OF A PEOPLE.
THE POWER OF COMMUNITY.

30th Annual TORATHON 2018

ONGOING from 5:30PM Registration

- People will be available at registration tables to assist you with all the room assignments.
- Some classrooms will have limited seating. Please be prepared with alternate choices.
- New courses may be added following this printing.
- Your Torathon ticket includes concert, and all classes.

Please check for any changes at the registration tables, or online at jewishcentralmass.org/torathon

6:00PM • Havdalah Service - Sanctuary

6:15PM • Malaveh Malkah in Song

30 years of Torathon is a reason to celebrate, and so we will! Our evening celebration will include a special and beautiful Havdalah, which marks the end of Shabbat and the beginning of a new week. The festivities will also include Cantor Rachel Reef-Simpson, Ian Simpson, Rabbi Rachel Gurevitz, Rabbi Suri Krieger and others leading us in a joyful "Melaveh Malkah" songfest, setting the mood for our 30th evening of Torathon learning. This is truly a milestone for our community. Don't miss it!

7:00PM - 9:50PM • Classes

10:00PM - 11:00PM • Social Hour

Refreshments in the Social Hall. Dietary laws observed.

ALEPH 7:00 PM – 7:50 PM

A1. GOD "BAGGAGE"

George Burns, Whoopi Goldberg, Morgan Freeman, Alanis Morissette and a few other actors portrayed God in very different ways, and often vastly different than the God we remember from our childhood. In this session, we will discuss how our beliefs in God have changed and how those changes are reflected in Jewish theologies. We will also look at whether belief in God is essential for being Jewish. We will conclude by debating the actor we think best represented God in the movies. Charlton Heston for the win?!

RABBI VALERIE COHEN, Temple Emanuel Sinai, Worcester

A2. INTRODUCTION TO JEWISH ETHICS: LAW, NARRATIVE, AND THE LIVED EXPERIENCE

What is Jewish Ethics? How does it differ from "regular" ethics? What is the relationship between Jewish Law and Ethics? Is the minimum of the law sufficient? How is it possible and what does it mean to be a scoundrel with the Torah's permission? We will work and study to answer these questions and others.

RABBI AVIVA FELLMAN, Congregation Beth Israel, Worcester

A3. THE MID-TERM ELECTIONS AND THE U.S.-ISRAEL ALLIANCE

The recent mid-term elections, once again, resulted in tremendous turnover in Congress. In the last 10 years more than 445 new members have been elected. While the Middle East remains in turmoil and threats to Israel unrelenting, hear an off-the-record briefing from AIPAC's Regional Director about how the election results – and the new Congress – will affect the U.S.-Israel relationship.

ERIC GIESSER, Regional Director for AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee)

A4. CONNECTIONS IN FAITH; INTERFAITH EXPLORATIONS OF OUR HOLY TEXTS AND THE TEXTS OF OUR LIVES

In the past year, over 200 people have come together in small group conversation and to learn about the faith traditions of each other. Join Rabbi Rachel Gurevitz of Congregation B'nai Shalom and Dr. Saleem Khanani of the Islamic Society of Greater Worcester for a comparative study of Cain and Abel/Qabil and Habil and an opportunity to join the conversation as we connect our holy texts to the texts of our lives.

RABBI RACHEL GUREVITZ, Congregation B'nai Shalom, Westborough
DR. SALEEM KHANANI, Islamic Society of Greater Worcester, Oncology Physician

A5. THE POWER OF THE ROUND

Singing Hebrew rounds has a long tradition of being inviting and powerful. This genre creates more engaging and communal music, and also encourages attentive listening. Please join us as we learn some simple lines and then create very pleasing sounds together. No experience necessary!

DR. JEREMY GOLDING, Co-Editor of Siddur Chaveirim Kol Yisrael, family physician and MICHELE ROBERTS, medical writer, editor

A6. THE WORCESTER BLACK-JEWISH ALLIANCE: RENEWING THE PARTNERSHIP

The African American and Jewish communities have a long history together as allies, working together to promote civil rights and the dignity and freedom of all American citizens. In this workshop we will discuss the Worcester Black-Jewish Alliance, a group formed almost two years ago through the Jewish Federation of Central Massachusetts, the Worcester NAACP and the Worcester Black Clergy Association. Rabbi Michael Swartz will facilitate the conversation, along with Pat and George Yancey of NAACP.

RABBI MICHAEL SWARTTZ, Beth Tikvah Synagogue, Westboro, Coordinator of Harold Cotton Leadership Center of JFCM, Jewish Chaplain of the Phillips Academy, Andover, MA

A7. THE LIFE AND WORK OF ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER; A LINK BETWEEN GENERATIONS?

In this class we will take a closer look at the life and work of one of the greatest storytellers of the 20th Century, Isaac Bashevis Singer. This famous Yiddish author was the winner of the 1978 Nobel Prize for literature. We will also explore a short story, and discuss his legacy as a potential link between generations. Come and learn!

MARCIA TANNENBAUM, Lawyer, Mediator, WISE Teacher

B1. DOCTORS, LAWYERS AND POLITICIANS?

Maybe it wasn't a Jewish parent's expectation, but did you ever wonder who was Worcester's first Jewish elected official, and what year he/she was elected? Learn the history of the immigration patterns, the transition from Worcester's Jewish immigrants to a variety of elected positions, and explore the social/demographic changes that helped make this happen. Democrats, Republicans and Unaffiliated are all welcome!

MOE BERGMAN, Attorney, Worcester City Councilor At-Large

B2. TIKKUN OLAM IN THE ERA OF CLIMATE CHANGE

The Torah requires us to be good keepers of our earth and all that dwell therein. The Kabbalah or Jewish mysticism, challenges us, further, to be active participants in improving this world. Apparently, we have been working in exactly the opposite direction, as demonstrated by recent ominous changes in global temperatures, rainfall patterns, and wildfires. Can we do anything to reverse these trends? Should we? Let's talk!

S. LESLIE BLATT, Professor Emeritus of Physics and Education, Clark University

B3. GENESIS 22: THE AKEIDA THROUGH SARAH'S EYES

"The Binding of Isaac" is one of the most famous stories in all of Torah. It has tremendous theological significance in Judaism as it is open to a myriad of interpretations. In this session, we will study and read through the story of "The Binding of Isaac" and then study some commentaries that will tell it through the lens of the feminine voice of our matriarch, Sarah.

RABBI AVIVA FELLMAN, Congregation Beth Israel, Worcester

B4. ADDRESSING THE "GREAT WHOMEVER"; BIBLICAL NAMES FOR GOD THAT MAY SURPRISE YOU!

Traditional Jewish texts use various words as names for God. Some may be surprising, some appealing, and some not. Do the common names for God we use satisfy you intellectually but leave your heart wanting more? Come explore three Biblical texts that offer you new ways to understand the experience in your life that some might call "Encounters with God."

RABBI CAROL GLASS, Director of Field Education at The Rabbinical School of Hebrew College, Newton, MA and Spiritual Director in private practice, Mussar teacher

B5. ARE WE LIVING IN THE MESSIANIC ERA?

Judaism predicts the advent of a human Messiah. We'll examine the origin of the messiah in primary Judaic sources and chart its evolution throughout Jewish history. Do world history and the world today look different when viewed through a "messianic" lens? You be the judge.

RABBI MICHOEL GREEN, Chabad of Westboro

B6. JEWISH DRUMMING WITH AN OPEN HEART

The drum is the external manifestation of our individual and community heartbeat. Lets come together and explore ways to connect on a primal, heart centered, embodied path towards connection, sacred space, Judaism and community building. Bring a drum or use one that is provided. Open to all skill levels - or no experience at all.

MITCHELL GORDON, Musician, Sacred Drummer

B7. GENESIS- AN ARTISTIC VIEW

What makes Torah one of the most widely studied books in human history? Torah continually challenges us to explore alternative interpretations. While there is copious literary commentary on the Text, artists and composers have also been inspired to respond to the challenge. Often, the individual vision, lyrics, and harmonies created inspire us with unique insights. This workshop will explore Creation and the Garden of Eden through the eyes of artists and the ears of musicians. Visual, musical, film and dance Midrash on these text will be explored.

RABBI SURI KRIEGER, Rabbi of B'nai Or, Jewish Renewal of Greater Boston, Adjunct Professor at Sacred Heart University, Fairfield, CT

B8. THE ONE VS. THE MANY

The Classic joke is that of the row boat passenger who bores a hole under his seat, and when others complain, responds "What's your beef, it's under my seat not yours." Judaism has traditionally valued both the rights of individuals and the good of the community, yet in the political world, those values often come into conflict. This session will explore that tension in both Jewish and American thought. Join the discussion.

GREG WEINER, Associate Professor of Political Science, Assumption College

C1. MENTAL ILLNESS FROM A NUMBER OF JEWISH PERSPECTIVES

Come join in an important discussion about a serious, relevant topic. What do the Torah and Talmud say about mental health? Where and how do we draw on our Jewish values to form our opinions and help others (and ourselves) in Jewish healing practices. Anecdotes, case studies and a wide range of experiences based on Rabbi Blotner's 40 years of work on the mental health wards will be included.

RABBI YA'AKOV BLOTNER, Congregation Shaarai Torah West, State Certified Prison Chaplain

C2. FROM SILVERMAN TO SHUMER—JEWISH WOMEN IN COMEDY

We will look at Jewish female comedienne over the last 3 decades, including Sarah Silverman, Amy Shumer, Judy Gold, and Iliza Vie Shlesinger. How do they contribute to our general society and what messages do they convey about our Jewish heritage and values? Do the newer comedienne push the boundaries of comedy too far? Let's explore and have some laughs!

EJ DOTTS, Beth Israel Synagogue, Westborough

C3. PRAYER 101— IS PRAYER FOR US OR G-D?

Most of us have experienced some element of prayer in our lives, yet may struggle with making it our own or understanding its purpose. In this session we will discuss the origins of prayer and the central place it holds in the Jewish Tradition. Come learn with an open mind and heart as we explore together.

RABBI MOSHE LIBEROW, Associate Rabbi of the Central Mass.Torah Center. Member of the Boston Beit Din (Rabbinical Court)

C4. KUMSITZ – LET'S SING ALONG

A "kumsitz" is a social gathering in Israel around a campfire, which usually happens at night on the beach or in a field, inevitably with a guitar present along with coffee and food to cook on the fire. While our kumsitz will not have a campfire, come join Cantor Rachel Reef Simpson and Musician Ian Simpson for this fun time of singing old and new favorites and popular Israeli songs.

CANTOR RACHEL REEF-SIMPSON, Temple Emanuel Sinai, Worcester, MA and IAN SIMPSON, Song Leader, Worcester, MA

C5. "AND YOU SHALL WRITE THEM ON THE DOOR POSTS OF YOUR HOMES, AND UPON YOUR GATES"

The mezuzah is one of the common symbols of a Jewish home and a daily reminder of our Jewish identity and faith. In this workshop you will learn about a kosher mezuzah and have an opportunity to make one for your home, for your child, your grandchild or any loved one.

ZIVA ROSENHAND, Educator, Congregation Beth Israel, Worcester

C6. A CRITICAL LOOK AT ISRAEL'S NATION STATE BILL

The Israeli Knesset recently passed a bill which includes various principals that enshrine Israel as a Jewish State. We will look at our understanding of the Nation State Bill, what it means, and some context for the criticism it is receiving. This law has added a complexity to Israel's outreach and public relations efforts, as well as for us in the USA and the rest of the diaspora. We will also examine the impact and effect the bill will have for Jewish and Arab Israelis.

STEVEN SCHIMMEL, Executive Director of the Jewish Federation of Central Massachusetts

C7. JEWISH LIFE ON CAMPUS AND BEYOND

There are many paths to discovering your Jewish identity on campus beyond joining Hillel or visiting Israel on a Birthright Trip. Discover how a panel of Clark University, WPI and Worcester State University students have forged their Jewish paths in Worcester and beyond. Their Jewish journeys may surprise you! Join the discussion.

BETH WHITMAN, Clark Hillel Director, with college student panel

Immediately after classes, everyone is invited into the Social Hall for a wonderful hour of refreshments and fun.

TORATHON²⁰¹⁸

Get your tickets today!

**Don't miss this exciting event!
Discounted Advance Tickets
now available!**



Generously supported by
The Rotman Family Foundation
in memory of
Murray & Ida Rotman

Brochures are available at these locations:

Congregation Agudat Achim

268 Washington St., Leominster

Beth Tikvah Synagogue

44 Oak Street, Westboro

Chabad of Westboro

54 South Street, Westboro

Clark Hillel

950 Main Street, Worcester

Congregation Beth Israel*

15 Jamesbury Dr., Worcester

Congregation B'nai Shalom

117 E. Main Street, Westboro

Jewish Federation of Central Massachusetts*

633 Salisbury Street, Worcester

Shaarei Torah West

835 Pleasant Street, Worcester

Temple Emanuel Sinai

661 Salisbury Street, Worcester

Temple Israel

107 Walnut Street, Athol

Worcester Jewish Community Center*

at the Frances & Jacob Hiatt Bldg.
633 Salisbury St., Worcester

Yeshiva Achei Tmimim

22 Newton Avenue, Worcester

***Tickets are available
at these locations.**

**Purchase Torathon tickets online at
jewishcentralmass.org/torathon**

Advance Tickets
on or before
Thursday, November 15, 2018
\$20

Tickets
at the door
\$25

**High School &
College Students**
\$5 in advance
\$10 at the door

For Additional Information and Transportation Assistance, call

**The Jewish Federation of
Central Massachusetts
(508) 756-1543**