

28th Annual

TORATHON

"Our Legacy of Jewish Values" 2017



This year

*Torathon will begin with
Havdalah and a joyous,
spirited concert starting at 5:50 pm.*

*Join noted Jewish singer and songwriter
Ellen Allard as she sets the stage for exploring
our theme, "Legacy of Jewish Values."*

*Following the concert, our wonderful evening of learning
will begin. From 7pm to 10pm you can choose from 24
fifty-minute 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 18, 2017

5:15 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.

28th Annual TORATHON 2017

ONGOING from 5:15PM
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

5:50PM • Havdalah Service - Sanctuary

6:00PM • Concert



We are once again pleased to have with us noted singer, songwriter and performer, **Ellen Allard**.

Ellen is a nationally known talent who is famous for presenting a uniquely Jewish spiritual spin to her music which relates to people of all ages. Ellen will present a

lively and engaging concert which will serve as a wonderful kick-off to this year's Torathon theme of "Our Legacy of Jewish Values." 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. IS MINDFULNESS A JEWISH VALUE?

Mindfulness is the ability to be fully present. Mindfulness training is becoming increasingly popular and is now offered in schools, higher education, business companies and even in the military. During this session, using text study and group discussion, we will explore the origin of mindfulness practices and whether they can and do have a place in Jewish tradition and values. We'll conclude with a mindfulness exercise of our own. Come and enjoy!

ELENA BLOTCHER, M.D., PhD., Director of the Concentration on Contemplative Studies, Brown University School of Medicine, Mindfulness instructor

A2. THE KING OF COMEDY LEAVES US LAUGHS AND LEGACY

Jerry Lewis, born Joseph Levitch, died just a few months ago. The famous rubber-faced comedian is also known as a humanitarian and philanthropist who raised billions for Muscular Dystrophy research. This session will look at some of Lewis' famous work, and at least one film that was never released as we explore the darkness behind the mask.

EJ DOTTS, Beth Tikvah Synagogue, Westborough

A3. UNDERSTANDING THE JEWISH CALENDAR

This class brings the Jewish calendar to life by exploring how the calendar is calculated and how it connects individuals to a larger Jewish community. Students are introduced to a different era of Jewish history through classical text study while having the opportunity to apply their lessons to real life through ongoing introspection and engaging activity. Simultaneously, this class sets the stage for a year-long emphasis on holidays as islands of time when Jewish people celebrate together as one.

RABBI JOE EIDUSON, R.J.E, Congregation B'nai Shalom, Westborough

A4. RADICAL RABBIS

Most Rabbinic discussions we've overheard have to do with the observance of mitzvot and how to lead a life of holiness. No topic, however, was off limits to the Rabbis' interest and inquiry. Come and learn some ancient Rabbinic texts that are considered radical, even by today's standards. What did they value and how did they advocate for those values? Be prepared to discuss the body, relationships, and other edgy topics.

RABBI AVIVA FELLMAN, Congregation Beth Israel, Worcester

A5. LILITH: FROM DEMON TO JEWISH FEMINIST INSPIRATION

Lilith was born from the midrash-making imaginations of the early generations of rabbis, emerging to explain a discrepancy in Genesis 1 and 2. Over the centuries her power was magnified through storytelling and superstitions. In the late twentieth-century she was reclaimed by Jewish feminists. Come and learn who she was and how she evolved over the centuries.

RABBI RACHEL GUREVITZ, Congregation B'nai Shalom, Westborough

A6. ANTI-SEMITISM TODAY: RECOGNIZING IT AND RESPONDING TO IT

In keeping with an unfortunate international trend, today we are seeing more and more instances of anti-Semitism in schools, work places, and various forms of media. In this session we will look at the stereotypical anti-Semitic tropes and images that have been with us for centuries and those of today. Are they the same or different? And what, if anything, is being done, or can be done, to counter this form of hate? Case studies will be presented and discussed.

DANIEL E. LEVENSON, ADL (Anti Defamation League) Associate Regional Director of New England, Past Executive Director of the Jewish Federation of New Hampshire and Director of Public Affairs at the Consulate General of Israel to New England.

A7. SONGS TO MEND A BROKEN WORLD

In this class, Cantor Rachel Reef-Simpson and song leader Ian Simpson will share music of social justice and healing of the world from the civil rights era to the contemporary music of today. Repertoire will include the music of Pete Seeger, Simon and Garfunkel, Woody Guthrie, Bob Dylan, Greg Holden and Dan Nichols. Bring your open hearts and joyful voices! Song sheets will be provided.

CANTOR RACHEL REEF-SIMPSON, Temple Emanuel Sinai, Worcester

A8. THE ESSENCE OF ISRAEL THROUGH THE EYES OF ITS YOUTH

Our usual outlets for information on Israel come from news reports, professional organizations, and seasoned politicians. The youth of Israel, however, given their sheer numbers (43% of the population under 24) and their accelerated maturity through required military service, have much to say about the future direction of the country. Join our young Israeli Emissaries along with other local Israelis in an open discussion on the true essence of Israel, today and tomorrow.

**STAV ATTIAS AND TAMAR MELECH, Young Emissaries
STEVEN SCHIMMEL, Moderator, Executive Director, JFCM**

BET 8:00 PM – 8:50 PM

B1. THE TRUTH ABOUT TATTOOS

How do we respond to so many Jews who celebrate their Jewish Identity through body art? Is it true that Jews are forbidden from permanently marking their skin? We'll read Biblical and Talmudic texts that both reinforce this belief and cast doubt on it. We'll also look at images of Jewish body art and discuss possible meanings behind the images and why someone would want that particular image as a permanent mark on their skin.

Rabbi Valerie Cohen, Temple Emanuel Sinai, Worcester

B2. IS HAFTARAH HALF A TORAH?

For at least two thousand years, chanting a Haftarah after the reading of the Torah has been a cherished Jewish tradition. But the passages chosen are often quite difficult poetry, not easy to enunciate or to understand, especially out of context as they are (just ask any Bar/Bat Mitzvah child). Who chose these passages and why? Do they send any kind of consistent message? And why are more than a quarter of them taken from the book of Isaiah?

PROFESSOR EVERETT FOX, Allen M. Glick Professor of Judaic and Biblical Studies, Clark University

B3. THE ETHICS OF OUR MOTHERS

Many women in the Tanakh, such as Rebecca, Miriam, and Naomi, model for us how to act in ways that are based on the values of *hesed* and *zedakah*; and some, such as the daughters of Zlaphachad, model how to be assertive when an injustice is done. In this session, we will explore and discuss what we can learn from the actions of these and other women in the Bible.

SHARON KREFETZ, Professor Emerita of Political Science, Clark University

B4. THE ELIJAH MYSTIQUE

Elijah is a rather mysterious and miraculous figure. While magic hardly seems an appropriate fix in our uncertain broken world today, there are values and virtues to be learned from the prophet Elijah. Take for example, the episode of The Garden of Navot- the first Biblical example of unlawful Eminent Domain- affording us an intriguing comparison of U.S. dealings with Native American territory.

Perhaps Elijah can guide us in current lessons of Tikun Olam.

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

B5. JEWISH MARRIAGE & DIVORCE 101

In this session we will explore the very interesting route traveled by Jewish marriage and divorce from Biblical times to today. We'll also discuss how Halacha (Jewish Law) handles some modern day issues and dilemmas that arise in these areas with traditional texts cited. Be prepared for a fascinating discussion.

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

B6. THE PROGRESSIVE CASE FOR ISRAEL

From innovations in conservation and environmentalism, to protecting the rights of women, minorities and the LGBT community, shared progressive values have been core components of Israeli society since its inception. Join us for a panel discussion featuring local leaders who have traveled to Israel as part of AIPAC's progressive outreach mission and learn how they make the progressive case for Israel.

RICK REDMOND, New England Political Director for AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee)

B7. ENTERING THE PSALMIST'S STUDIO

Join Rabbi and Cantor Zehavi for an exploration of the underpinnings of traditional Jewish music and an examination of why musical expression of the Psalms has been such an **enigma**. Cantor Ashira Zehavi will share some of her original compositions for Kabbalat Shabbat with **harp** accompaniment and harmony.

**RABBI YEHOSHUA ZEHAVI AND CANTOR ASHIRA ZEHAVI
Congregation Agudat Achim, Leominster**

B8. LEONARD COHEN: HIS LIFE AND LEGACY IN POETRY AND SONG

Leonard Cohen was a legend whose life began in 1934 in privileged, traditional Westmount - Montreal's elegant section of the city where wealthy Jews still reside. He was buried in a private ceremony in a family plot on that same hill in November of 2016. Leonard Cohen's music is known worldwide. His life was a spiritual journey from synagogue to Buddhist monastery to the Greek Isles with many romantic turns along the way. His "Hallelujah" is heard everywhere from gospel choirs to SNL. Together we will look at his life, his art, his poetry and his music.

MARCIA TANNENBAUM, Attorney, Mediator, WISE teacher

B9. ISRAELI DANCING

Learn traditional and some not so traditional Israeli dances. Dances from the days of the first Israeli pioneers consist mainly of circle and partner dances of Eastern Europe with Arab and Yeminite influences. Maybe we'll mix in some contemporary steps as well. Let's have fun!

SAUL AND REENA SLOVIN, Congregation Beth Israel, Worcester

GIMEL 9:00 PM – 9:50 PM

C1. 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 Ellen Allard and our community of musicians for this fun time of singing old favorites and popular Israeli songs.

**ELLEN ALLARD, musician, educator, and song writer,
with other community cantors and musicians**

C2. NOBEL PRIZES (AND SURPRISES)

Albert Einstein earned one in Physics, but not for Relativity. Paul Samuelson and Milton Friedman each earned one, for diametrically-opposed approaches to Economics. Nadine Gordimer earned one in Literature for her sensitive stories of life under South African apartheid. Some 22 percent of all the Nobel Prizes ever awarded have gone to Jews, and all six categories have been represented. We will look at a few Nobel Laureates in detail: their accomplishments, their personal histories, and the social and political environments in which they lived and worked.

LES BLATT, Professor Emeritus of Physics and Education, Clark University

C3. COMMON GROUND: ISLAM AND JUDAISM

While many are quick to note the differences between Islam and Judaism, there are some fascinating practices that we have in common. Come and explore some of these surprising similarities between our two faiths: from sharing a lunar-style calendar to life cycle events, from dietary laws to modest dress. The many similarities will surprise you and for sure, the more we talk to each other, the more we will discover. In a highly divisive world, building bridges can start with unveiling our many commonalities. Let's learn from each other in this open discussion.

MONA IVES, Islamic Educator and Lecturer, WISE Program teacher

C4. PRAYERS THAT TOUCH THE HEART

The prayers in synagogue may seem rote to us and they do move quickly from one to the next. But when I slow down and spend time with them, there are those that touch my heart. Maybe they will touch yours as well, or maybe this session will inspire you to look more closely at the liturgy.

RABBI CHERIE KOLLER-FOX, President of NewCAJE

C5. MICROGRAPHY: THE ART OF "LITTLE THINGS MEAN A LOT"

Micrography (literally "small writing") is a Jewish form of calligrams developed in the 9th century with parallels in Christianity and Islam, utilizing minute Hebrew letters to paint a picture. Come join this teacher and artist in a "hands on experience" as you learn spiritual ways to encounter verse through visual art. No artistic talent or experience is needed!

SHERI LEVSON, Rimon Director, Congregation Beth Israel, Worcester

C6. BEING JEWISH IN COLLEGE IS MORE COMPLICATED THAN YOU THINK

The well known Jewish weekly, The Forward, recently explored the situation of Jewish college students, claiming that the presence of strong Jewish clubs and organizations on campus(i.e., Hillel, AIPAC, J-Street, Birthright, etc.) can provide a stable environment for Jewish students. Looking deeper, others claim that the diversity and complexity of the college community can many times be difficult and must be recognized. Join Clark Hillel director Beth Whitman and a panel of local Jewish college students as we discuss the successes and challenges for Jewish identity on campus today.

BETH WHITMAN, Hillel Director, Clark University

C7. MAKING VS. KEEPING: FASHIONING A SPIRITUAL SHABBATH

It is common to focus on the observance of Shabbat as a matter of abstaining from a long list of forbidden activities. But what are all of those prohibitions supposed to help us create? Focusing on the positive rituals, we will draw inspiration and guidance to help us fashion a Shabbat that is a centerpiece for our relationships with self, family, community, and God.

RABBI YEHOSHUA ZEHAVI, Congregation Agudat Achim, Leominster

TORATHON²⁰¹⁷

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 Rotman

Brochures are available at these locations:

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

Shaarai 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 16, 2017
\$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**