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NEWS & VIEWS

February 7, 2019 | 2 Adar I 57798



Tonight: Author Joy Ladin To Speak at Hebrew College

Join us tonight at 8 pm when Professor Joy Ladin discusses her new book *The Soul of the Stranger: Reading God and Torah from a Transgender Perspective* on February 7 at Hebrew College.

Professor Ladin, the David and Ruth Gottesman Professor of English at Yeshiva University, is the author of nine books and the recipient of a 2016 National Endowment for the Arts Creative Non-Fiction Fellowship and a 2016 Hadassah Brandeis Research Fellowship.

In this new book, Ladin explores some of the best-known Torah stories through the lens of transgender experience, asking fundamental questions about how religious texts, traditions, and the understanding of God can be enriched by transgender perspectives, and how the Torah and trans lives can illuminate one another. Drawing on her own experience and lifelong reading practice, Ladin shows how the Torah, a collection of ancient texts that assume human beings are either male or female, speaks both to practical transgender concerns, such as marginalization, and to the challenges of living without a body or social role that renders one intelligible to others—challenges that can help us understand a God who defies all human categories. These creative, evocative readings transform our understanding of the Torah's portrayals of God, humanity, and relationships between them.

The event, which is co-sponsored by the [Rabbinical School of Hebrew College](#) and [Beyn Kodesh l'Chol](#), is free and open to the public.

[Learn more](#)

Meet the Strategic Planning Committee

As highlighted in last week's News & Views, in early December President Sharon Cohen Anisfeld assembled a team of Board members, faculty and staff, Jewish community leaders, and individuals with relevant expertise to guide a College-wide strategic planning process. The group is focused on identifying and articulating the College's core mission and distinctive strengths and exploring opportunities for increased institutional efficiency, integration, and alignment; strategic innovation and investment; and strategic partnerships. Committee members include:



Rabbi Sharon Cohen Anisfeld
President of Hebrew College

Rabbi Daniel Berman, Rab` 10
Rabbi at Temple Reyim in Newton, MA

Alan Crane
Entrepreneur Partner at Polaris Partners

Elisa Deener-Agus
Vice President of Strategic Initiatives at CJP

Susan Wolf Ditkoff
Co-head of Bridgespan's Philanthropy Practice

Rabbi Jane Kanarek, PhD
Associate Professor of Rabbinics and Associate Dean of Academic Development and Advising at Hebrew College

Professor Sara S. Lee
Former Director of the Rhea Hirsch School of Education at Hebrew Union College
Member, Hebrew College Board of Trustees

Andy Offit
Chair, Hebrew College Board of Trustees

Guy Sapirstein
Applied Clinical Psychologist

Jevin Eagle
Rabbinical Student & Executive Director of Boston University Hillel

Jack Eiferman
Director of Goulston & Storrs
Member, Hebrew College Board of Trustees

Alan Sherman
Vice President of Marketing & Advancement at Hebrew College

Sarah B. Sonnenfeld
North American Manager, People & Organization practice at Boston Consulting Group
Member, Hebrew College Board of Trustees

Read Committee Members' Bios

SIGHTS & SOUNDS

Winter Seminar: On January 28, the Rabbinical School of Hebrew College hosted a one-day conference entitled "The Past and Future of Synagogues," which brought together scholars, thought leaders, and practitioners to discuss the problems and potential of synagogues in America. The conference, which kicked off the semester's annual Winter Seminar, included a speaker, a recording of the podcast *Judaism Unbound*, and an evening book event with Rabbinical School Dean Rabbi Dan Judson, author of *Pennies from Heaven: The History of American Synagogue and Money*.



Rabbinical School Dean Rabbi Dan Judson welcomes attendees



Dr. Jonathan Sarna speaks on "Lessons from American Synagogue History"



(l-r) Judaism Unbound podcast participants: Co-host Lex Rofeberg, Cert`18; Rabbi Jessica Kate Meyer, Rab`14; Rabbi David Fainsilber, Rab`14; and Rabbinical School Dean Rabbi Dan Judson



(l-r) Rabbinical student Jessica Goldberg and Nosh attendees.



Beni Summers tells a story about his return to Judaism.

The Nosh: More than 100 young adults in the Greater Boston area came together on Tuesday, January 26, at Mamaleh's in Cambridge for [Eser's](#) "The Nosh 2019: Jewish Stories Told Live...at Mamaleh's." The event, which was organized by Sara Gardner, Associate Director of Young Adult Learning at Hebrew College and supported by a CJP Young Adult Innovation Grant, featured more than a dozen storytellers, including a few who were inspired to participate at the event. Eser's 10-week spring program, "[Ten](#)

[Millennial Updates to Jewish Living](#)” kicks off next month with classes in Brookline, Downtown Boston, Jamaica Plain, Newton, Sharon and Somerville. [Learn more and register](#) (or create your own group)!

IN THE NEWS

[News, News Releases & Past Newsletters](#)

[Faculty Perspectives & Publications](#)

[Eser's](#) "The Nosh 2019: Jewish Stories Told Live...at Mamaleh's" event was featured in a February 7, 2019 [The Jewish Journal article](#) "At Mamaleh's in Cambridge, millennial Jewish nosh and schmooze."

President Sharon Cohen Anisfeld is quoted in a February 1, 2019 The Boston Globe article entitled "Hebrew College launches new dual degree program." In the article, which describes Hebrew College's partnership with the Pardes Institute in Israel and the College's current strategic planning work, President Anisfeld remarked that the College is "a really vibrant center of intellectual, spiritual, and communal engagement."

Dr. Bernice Lerner, Dean of Adult Learning, authored a chapter called "Compassion in Dialogue" in the recently published book [Peacebuilding Through Dialogue: Education, Human Transformation, and Conflict Resolution](#) (George Mason University Press, 2018).

The article "Is the Autumn Ingathering Festival the Beginning, Middle, or End of the Year?" by **Harvey Bock**, Hebrew Language Coordinator in the [Rabbinical School](#), was published on February 4, 2019 in [TheTorah.com](#).

Rabbinical School Rector Rabbi Arthur Green was quoted in a January 24, 2019 [The Jewish Journal article](#) entitled "Learning from friends: The spirit of havurah is alive and well."

EVENTS

HUMANS OF HEBREW COLLEGE

TONIGHT!

Soul of the Stranger: Reading God and Torah from a Transgender Perspective

with Yeshiva University Professor Joy Ladin

Feb. 7 | 8 pm

Hebrew College

Free and open to the public

Questions? Contact [Laurena Rosenberg](#)

**Community Hevra Kadisha Zayin Adar
Commemoration Dinner**
Hebrew College President Sharon Cohen Anisfeld
will be the featured guest speaker
Feb. 12 | 6-9 pm
Temple Emanuel
Newton, MA
Guests \$20 | Free for Hevra Kadisha members
[Learn more](#) | [Reservations](#)

Jewish Genealogy: Discover Your Family History
Sponsored by the [Jewish Genealogical Society of
Greater Boston](#)
Eight Wednesdays, March 6-May 8
7-9:30 p.m.
Hebrew College
[Register](#)

**Alternative Realities: Purim & the
Possibility of Transformation**
Rabbis Ebn Leader, Nehemia Polen & Or Rose
March 18 | 8-10:15 pm
Israeli-American Council of Boston, Newton
[View English flyer](#) | [View Hebrew flyer](#)
\$10 | [Register](#)

Torah Godly Play
May 19-20
8 am-3 pm
Hebrew College
[Learn more](#) | [Register](#)



My Jewish Journey with Eser, Parenting and Beyond...

“For me, Eser and PTJL were all about building community that incorporated my Jewish identities through learning. Now, I feel I’ve begun to form a community at Temple Hillel B’nai Torah through PTJL, which is so important to me as I try to incorporate a Jewish identity, and, eventually, a Jewish education in my two-year-old daughter’s life.”

(Hallie Bregman, [Eser & Parenting Through A
Jewish Lens](#) participant)

[Read More](#)

STATE OF
FORMATION

Weekly Blog hosted by the [Miller Center for Interreligious Learning & Leadership](#) at Hebrew College

The Art of Listening

By *Shelton Oakley Hersey*
Interfaith Youth Initiative Program Director
Cooperative Metropolitan Ministries



Listening is an art, requiring practice, skill, spirit, and inspiration. The artistic medium is you: your

ears, your body, your mind, and your heart. Listening is something altogether different from hearing, an unintentional (or possibly intentional) experience of one of your senses at work. Listening does not exclude listeners who are deaf or hard of hearing and instead is an artistic form available to all. Listening actively invites a guest—perhaps a new idea, a wise friend, or a personal story—to engage with your soul and exposes you to influence and movement in the very core of your humanity. What we hear may or may not become a part of us over time. Yet, what we truly *listen* to soaks into us at that very moment. We, the listeners, are receivers, holders, bearers, and witnesses.

Read more

70 FACES OF TORAH

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

'Wings of Desire': God's Presence in the Tabernacle

Parashat Terumah (Exodus 25:1-27:19)

By Rachel Adelman, PhD

Assistant Professor, [Rabbinical School of Hebrew College](#)



After the pyrotechnics at Sinai – lightning, thunder, the blast of the shofar, and the Mountain, wrapped in smoke and flame (Exod. 19:18-19, 20:18)—God adjures Moses: “have them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them [*ve-shakhanti be-tokham*]” (25:8). What follows are the detailed instructions for making the Mishkan, the “Tabernacle” or “Tent of Meeting” where God would come to reside [*sh.kh.n.*] among the people. But how can the Divine Presence [*Shekhinah*] condense into a confined space? Is God not everywhere, intangible yet ubiquitous? Here, we hear the still small voice in the wake of Revelation, how Israel might take the Divine Presence with them. And it is contingent on a paradox – the enigma of the human heart, yearning for union with God while acknowledging the elusive nature of that Presence.

The very detailed orders to build the Tabernacle in Parashat Terumah and Tetzaveh (chapters 25-31) and their fulfillment in *Veyakhel* and *Pekudei* (chapters 35-40), take up most of the second half of the Book of Exodus, interrupted only by the account of the Sin of the Golden Calf and its resolution in *Ki Tissa* (chapters 32-34). According to rabbinic tradition, the commandment to build the Mishkan *follows* Israel’s apostasy. In this re-ordering, the collective building project provides healing, a means of channeling the people’s desire to contain the presence of God in their midst. Before they had this holder, they followed the solid effigy of a false god. Just forty days after hearing the words, “You shall not make for yourself an idol...” (20:4), Aaron gathered the people’s gold rings, cast all the precious

metal into a mold to make the molten calf, declaring: "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!" (32:4).

Read more



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