

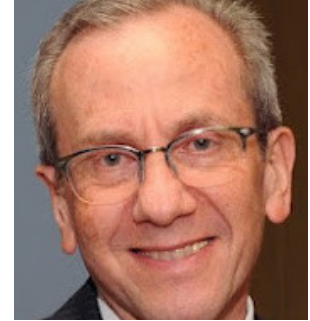
Newsletter

2021 - 2022 ■ 5782



ACADEMY
for JEWISH
RELIGION

From the Chair of the Board



Many have heard that Rabbi Akiva pronounced, “And you shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Leviticus 19:18) as the great principle in the Torah. Less well known is the opinion of Ben Azzai, who suggested that an overarching, greater principle is derived from Genesis 5:1, “This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day of God’s creation of Adam, in the image of God Adam was created.” (Sifra, Kedoshim; also cited in Bereishit Rabbah 24:7). Within the message of Ben Azzai we hear a voice that challenges us to recognize the fundamental, God-like humanity in everyone and anyone. And that resonates deeply with the 66-year vision, mission and history of AJR and our devotion to a pluralism which we see reflected in a 3,000 - year tradition.

Our ability to educate and nurture rabbis, cantors and Jewish leaders who can see the spark of the Divine in ALL is paramount to our administration and faculty, and to the incredible students we attract. The creativity with which we identify and develop diverse paths to reach out to the hearts, minds and souls of ALL whom our students and alumni will encounter, serves as a model for other seminaries. Our enormous growth and diversification during the past few years - amidst a global pandemic, crises of inequity and injustice, and threats to

democracy both in the U.S. and abroad - speaks to the resonance of our vision for a broad, open and diverse Jewish world. And that message enables our alumni to be leaders within their Jewish communities, interacting with all,

“Our ability to educate and nurture rabbis, cantors and Jewish leaders who can see the spark of the Divine in ALL is paramount to our administration and faculty, and to the incredible students we attract.”

caring for all, seeing the spark of God in ALL. If you share our vision, mission and sense of purpose, become a fully committed, passionate part of our incredible AJR family. Support us in any and all ways. Help others to learn about our amazing and holy work here at AJR. Become a partner with us as we further blaze a path for the decades ahead. Together we can make our world a more caring, more just, more compassionate place for all of God’s creations.

Dr. William Liss-Levinson

A Word from the CEO and Academic Dean



Cherokee Chief Wilma Mankiller was the first female chief of a Native American tribe. While her accomplishments were vast and significant in making a difference in Native American lives, she is also known for her writings. She is famous for having said: *"Leaders are encouraged to remember seven generations in the past and consider seven generations in the future when making decisions that affect the people."* What a profound statement that speaks as much to the Jewish community as to the Native American People. It is certainly an idea that we at AJR always have in our minds when thinking about our community specifically and clergy education in general.

At AJR we are always cognizant of our debt to our past, and to the chain of tradition. We know that we are standing on the shoulders of those who came before us, all who helped the Jewish community grow and flourish. At the same time, we are equally aware of our commitment to the Jewish community of today and tomorrow. We know that living traditions must grow and evolve, and that leaders of those communities must be prepared to be dynamic, open, and creative. Therefore, an AJR education includes required courses in Entrepreneurship, Conflict Resolution, Science, and Sacred Arts, in addition to our deep training in Talmud, Bible, Codes, History, Philosophy, and Pastoral Skills. We know that our clergy must be steeped in traditional text, but must be able to build on our tradition to face the needs of today's communities.

This commitment goes beyond coursework. AJR has always been known for its understanding of the individual, and for its sensitivity to the needs

of each individual student. Flexibility is built into our program to make it possible for people from many walks of life to become clergy. Here, too, AJR is always thinking seven generations in the past and seven generations in the future.

This understanding of the Jewish community, of Jewish leadership, and of clergy education has enabled AJR to experience such rapid growth as to make us one of the foremost institutions training Jewish clergy in the United States. We urge you to join us in our holy mission.

"This understanding of the Jewish community, of Jewish leadership, and of clergy education has enabled AJR to experience such rapid growth as to make us one of the foremost institutions training Jewish clergy in the United States."

Join us as we train tomorrow's leaders. Join us as we focus on inclusivity, with a special training program for Deaf leaders and ASL interpreters. Join us as we create programming bringing an understanding of the Jewish community to Christian clergy. Join us as we build our Center for Judaism and Science. Join us as we train clergy to serve as Jewish chaplains in the military. Join us and be part of a very special institution that cares deeply for the individual while serving the larger community. Join us! Together, with your support, on the shoulders of our past, and with our eyes to the future, we can play a critical role in building the Jewish community of tomorrow.

Dr. Ora Horn Prouser

ORDINATION CEREMONY

חג הסמיכה
תשפ"ב

THURSDAY, APRIL 7, 2022

4:00 P.M. EST



ORDINEES



RABBI STEPHEN MARK AXINN



RABBI ANAT KATZIR



RABBI DAVEY ROSEN



5782 AWARD RECIPIENTS



MAYOR MIKE SPANO
TUVEI HA'IR AWARD
FOR EXCELLENCE IN
COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP



RABBI DR.
MATTHEW GOLDSTONE
P'NEI TORAH
FACULTY AWARD

A CELEBRATION OF SERVICE

THURSDAY, MARCH 24, 2022

7:00 P.M. EST



B'NEI MITZVAH
CLASS OF 2009
FOR 13 YEARS
OF SERVICE TO
THE JEWISH
COMMUNITY



RABBI SHARON BALLAN



CANTOR MEREDITH GREENBERG



RABBI MICHAEL G. KOHN



RABBAH RONA MATLOW



RABBI HALINA RUBINSTEIN



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כל מי שעוסקים בצרכי צבור באמונה

*They who serve the community
with faithful devotion*

MEHADRIN CLASS
OF 1997 FOR 25
YEARS OF SERVICE
TO THE JEWISH
COMMUNITY



RABBI JUDITH B. EDELSTEIN



RABBI BRIAN GLUSMAN



RABBI CHAVA KOSTER



RABBI ELCHANAN
SUNNY SCHNITZER



RABBI ROBERT SILVERS



RABBI JULIUS RABINOWITZ
ARC ALUMNUS
OF THE YEAR

ARC ALUMNUS
OF THE YEAR

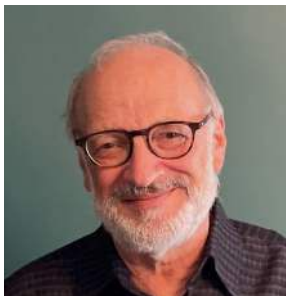
Retreat 2021

Mindfulness, Music Therapy, and the Brain Research that Speaks to Them Both

Supported by a Science for Seminaries grant from the American Association for the Advancement of Science's Dialogue on Science, Ethics, and Religion, our 2021 Retreat brought together scientists and AJR faculty to explore the power of mindfulness and music therapy for contemporary Jewish clergy and their communities.

Showing up: Presence as the Essential Ingredient in Just About Everything ■
Understanding Suffering: What Does Mindfulness Teach Us? ■ Honoring One's
Core Musicality: What Engaging in Music Can Do for People ■ Pain, Fear,
Transcendence, Meditation, and the Brain ■ Self-doubt, Insecurity, and Other
Unwelcome Lessons ■ Be Still and Know: Contextualizing Mindfulness in
the East and in Judaism

AJR Retreat 2021 Presenters



Paul R. Fulton, EdD

Clinical psychologist, founding member, Institute for Meditation and Psychotherapy



Job Jindo, PhD

Professor, researcher, author, AJR faculty member



Dr. Sara Lazar, PhD

Professor, Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School, researcher, mindfulness practitioner



Alan Turry, DA, MT-BC, LCAT

Managing Director, Nordoff-Robbins Center for Music Therapy, NYU Steinhardt School

Intensive 2022

Oz VeHedvah: Building Joyful Resilience in Ourselves and Our Communities

Responding to this moment of heightened clergy burnout, national and international unrest, and another year of the pandemic, we dedicated our 2022 Intensive to cultivating resilience. Drawing upon elements of AJR's Sacred Arts initiative, our multiday program featured modalities for our community to foster joyful resilience for themselves and others.

Resilience as a Jewish Concept ■ Supporting Resilience in Ourselves: Play, Reflection, Sharing ■ Elim: Recovering Resilience and A Biblio-drama on Exodus 15:27 ■ Engaging the Art of Empathy ■ Window and Mirror as Spiritual Formation ■ Resilience, Intersectionality, and Performance Fatigue ■ Owning Vulnerability: Impostor Syndrome and Other Challenges ■ Supporting Resilience in Jewish Educational Settings ■ Resilience Play and Practice: Circus Play ■ Supporting Resilience in Our Spiritual Lives ■ *Ozi veZimrat Yah*: Cultivating Spiritual Resilience

AJR Intensive 2022 Presenters



Chaya-Sharon Heller
CEO, educator and practitioner,
ChayaVeda™ Integrative
Healing Arts



Rabbi Naomi Kalish, PhD
Director, Center
for Pastoral Education,
Jewish Theological Seminary,
Professor, AJR faculty



Rabbi David Evan Markus
pulpit rabbi, author,
New York State judiciary,
AJR faculty



Dr. Peter Pitzele
author,
co-creator, Bibliodrama



Rabba Daniella Pressner
Head of School, Akiva School,
Nashville, TN



Ayal Prouser
Co-founder and
director, Time Flies Circus



**Kohenet Dr.
Harriette E. Wimms**
Clinical Psychologist,
Professor, Loyola University,
AJR faculty

The Academy for Jewish Religion and the Alda Center for Communicating Science Broadcast Live from the campus at Stony Brook University

Religion and Science

פנים אל פנים

Building bridges to lives of meaning

Thursday, June 16, 7:00 pm

Who should attend? Those committed to science, religion, and their intersection.

Honoring



Alan Alda
Mevinei Mada Award
for Enhancing the
Accessibility of Science



Rabbi Jill G. Hackell,
M.D.
P'nei Torah Faculty Award



Laura Lindenfeld, PhD
Executive Director, Alda
Center and Dean, School
of Communication and
Journalism



Rabbi Ariann
Weitzman
Congregational Rabbi and
Science Enthusiast

Rabbi Ariann Weitzman, Rabbi Robert Green
Co-Chairs, Religion and Science Face to Face

Complimentary
Program

Welcome:

The program will include a short video welcome by Alan Alda.

In Conversation:

Laura Lindenfeld with AJR Rabbis

Why should religion & science care about each other? Exploring their partnership in the search for meaning.

How does science impact on Judaism?
Storytelling the relationship.



Etzba Elohim: **Understanding and Interpreting Jewish Prayer in ASL**

Together, the Academy for Jewish Religion and the Jewish Deaf Resource Center are offering a program that certifies American Sign Language interpreters and Deaf community prayer leaders by training them in the depth and meaning of the liturgy they already have the tools to interpret on a less profound level.

"Those who speak with their hands, the Deaf community and ASL interpreters, are speaking in God's image," Dr. Prouser said. "God uses divine fingers in the Bible to achieve miraculous results, and, to write the Ten Commandments. So when we use our hands to communicate, whether as the Deaf community, or as ASL interpreters, we are acting in the divine image."

JDRC President, Susan Cohen, notes that *"The Academy for Jewish Religion and the JDRC have created an historic partnership to address the critical need*

of training hearing and Deaf ASL interpreters for synagogue services and programs of Jewish context." Together, JDRC and AJR developed a new certificate program...*"that includes lectures and ASL prayer labs and offers professional interpreters and Deaf prayer leaders an opportunity to analyze and understand Jewish prayer so that they can create an equivalent experience for Jewish deaf individuals who rely on American Sign Language as their primary mode of communication. Members of the Deaf community have a voice in the design of the program so that it can benefit both hearing and Deaf interpreters and Deaf prayer leaders."*

As Dr. Prouser says, *"It's part of our belief in inclusion of all sorts, and our belief in the importance of the diversity of the Jewish community. It's about the respect we feel for all members of the community, and how we cherish them."*

For more information: ajr.edu or jdrc.org





2021-2022 HIGHLIGHTS

Course Highlights

B'tzelem Elohim: Biblical Text Through the Lens of Disability Studies

Dr. Ora Horn Prouser

Biblical personalities through the lens of Disability Studies provides access to new dimensions of their characters and the texts in which we encounter them.

Judaism and the Earth

Rabbi Dr. Jill Hammer

Encountering the wide variety of ways Jews think about their responsibility for the earth, and considering the implications for our own life choices, leadership choices, and community values.

Science in Dialogue with Biblical Imagery

Rabbi Dr. Jill Hammer

Exploring natural imagery that permeates the Hebrew Bible — trees, mountains, wind, and stars — together with related areas of science — biology, geology, meteorology, and astrophysics — to discover how we might read the Bible in new ways.

History and Future of Kabbalah

Dr. David Seidenberg

Understanding the ebbs and flows of the history of Kabbalah while thinking about what Kabbalah means to us now and how might that guide the evolution of Kabbalah into the future.

Pharmacology for Clergy

*Cantor Michael Kasper and
Dr. David Aftergood*

Providing a framework for clergy to understand the basics of pharmacology and their responsibilities towards congregants and community members who present themselves as in need of mental health services.

Scientific Literacy

Rabbi Geoffrey Mitelman

Understanding science not as a collection of facts, but as a process of discovery, and learning how we can share these findings, from COVID-19 and climate change to genetic engineering and artificial intelligence, with our communities.

Teaching Jewish Peace and Conflict Resolution

Rabbi Dr. Marc Gopin

Introducing Jewish peace and conflict resolution studies for the purposes of Jewish education at all levels through peer collaboration, scenario building, and roleplay.

Program Highlights

Negotiating Clergy Contracts

Abby Kelman

Professional development session for alumni and seniors.

Middot Programs: Anavah (Humility) and Hakarat Hatov (Gratitude)

*Rabbi Dr. Matthew Goldstone and
Rabbi Dr. Jill Hammer*

Cultivating *middot* to continue our development as spiritual leaders.

From Justification to Justice: Jewish Sources About Abortion

Dr. Michal Raucher

Examining abortion narratives belonging to Jewish women who have terminated pregnancies and considering how these texts offer an important correction to the canon of Jewish sources on abortion.

Combatting Anti-Trans Discrimination

Maharat Rori Picker Neiss

Responding to recent discriminatory laws and thinking about our responsibility as Jewish leaders.

Beyond Reverend King and Rabbi Heschel: Rekindling Modern Black-Jewish Dialogue and Partnership

Matt Fieldman

Learning about the “Rekindle” Black-Jewish dialogue program launched in Cleveland.



Kol Hakavod to Our Faculty!

DR. ARYEH AMIHAY

"The Glory of the Scholar: The Nexus of Beauty and Intellect in Chinese and Rabbinic Literature," *Philosophy East and West* 73:3

RABBI MATTHEW GOLDSTONE, PHD

Co-author with Mira Wasserman, "The Responsibilities of Bystanders: The Power and Risks of Rebuke" in *Respect & Responsibility: A Jewish Ethics Study Guide* (Sacred Spaces); "The Category of 'Exigent Circumstances' in Jewish Legal Literature," Midwest Jewish Studies Association Annual Meeting, online; "A Contextual Comparative Approach for Reading the Gospels and the Tannaitic *Midrashim*," Mid-Atlantic Region of the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, online; "Genetic Manipulation and Jewish Values," NewCAJE, online; joined the Editorial Board for the *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*.

RABBI JILL HAMMER, PHD

Undertorah: An Earth-Based Kabbalah of Dreams (Ayin Press, 2022); Reviewed *Seasons of Joy: A Modern Guide to the Jewish Holidays* by R. Arthur Waskow.

DR. JOB JINDO

Visiting Fellow, Oxford Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies: Towards the Study of Jewish-Buddhist Relations (Spring 2022); "Bible, The Hebrew," in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy of Religion*, ed. Stewart Goetz and Charles Taliaferro. 4 vols. (New York: Blackwell, 2021) 1:248-258; "On Poetry and Prophecy in Jeremiah," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Book of Jeremiah*, ed. Louis Stulman and Edward Silver (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021): 192-216; "Muffs, Yochanan," in *The Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*. (Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2022): 20:50-51; "On Metaphor and Frames of Reference: The Seed of Blessing in Isaiah 40-66." Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, San Antonio; "Hagami and Chouraqui Between East and West," Oxford Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies: Towards the Study of Jewish-Buddhist Relations, Oxford; "What Is Biblical Monotheism? One God, Two Jews, Three Opinions, and Many More," David Patterson Lecture at the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, Oxford; "Shōchō Hagami, Tendai Buddhism, and the Survival of Humanness," Tendai Buddhist Institute New York Betsuin; "Between Hagami and Chouraqui: Monotheisms, Asia, and the Survival of Humanness," Conference of the Oxford Seminar in Advanced Jewish Studies: Towards the Study of Jewish-Buddhist Relations, Oxford.

RABBI BETH KRAMER-MAZER

Appointed as Assistant Dean of Student Life and Director of Placement at AJR.

DR. TOVA MARKENSON

Recipient, Emerging Scholars Award, The Center for Judaic and Holocaust Studies at Youngstown State University and the Jewish Studies Program at Kent State University; "Jewish Witches in Performance: Queer Magic and the Yiddish Stage," Association for Jewish Studies Annual Conference, Chicago; Appearing as "Lili Epstein" in *The History of Now*.

AYAL PROUSER

"Mah Tovv Ohalekha Ya'akov: Studying the Tanakh Through Circus Arts," Batsheva de Rothschild Workshop on Embodied Cognition and Learning in STEAM through the Weizmann Institute (with Dr. Ora Horn Prouser).

DR. ORA HORN PROUSER

"A Hermeneutic of Disabilities, Stated and Unstated, in the Hebrew Bible," European Academy of Religion; "Mah Tovv Ohalekha Ya'akov: Studying the Tanakh Through Circus Arts," Batsheva de Rothschild Workshop on Embodied Cognition and Learning in STEAM through the Weizmann Institute (with Ayal Prouser); "So You Think You Know Pluralism" and "David and Goliath: Modern Hebrew Poetry on the Bible," NewCAJE, online; John A. Widtsoe Foundation "Come Follow Me" Conversations about the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible" for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints; "Awe-tism and the Biblical God," in *Ve'Ed Ya'aleh (Gen 2:6): Essays in Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies Presented to Edward L. Greenstein*, Peter Machinist et al., eds. (SBL Press, 2021) 2:1143-1160.

RABBI DEBRA ORENSTEIN

Member, Editorial Board, *Masorti: Conservative Judaism Magazine*; Scholar-in-Residence, Congregation Beth Israel Ner Tamid, Milwaukee.

RABBI ROB SCHEINBERG, PHD

Co-author with Rabbis Guy Austrian and Deborah Silver, "Calling non-binary people to Torah honors," Rabbinical Assembly's Committee on Jewish Law and Standards.

CANTOR SOL ZIM

Featured in a *Yom HaAtzmaut* newsletter, Ofir Sobol, for the history of his melody for "Avinu Shebashamayim."

Spotlight on AJR Student, Howard K. Glantz

My “Jewish journey” begins at Beth El Temple in West Hartford, sitting in *shul* between my parents, *z”l*. My father pointed at the words in the siddur and urged me to follow his finger as it jumped back and forth with every word or phrase the Hazzan repeated, and my mother loved to sing along. I never thought to ask what the words meant.

The rabbi, Stanley M. Kessler *z”l*, convinced my parents to send me to Camp Ramah. That experience laid a foundation for individual Hebrew words and phrases that we had to use... that is if we wanted to eat! In the *חדר אוכל* no one would pass anything without hearing ... *נא להעביר את ה*. Ramah was like Jewish basic training where I first laid *tefillin* daily and the energetic singing stirred me in a new way.



My senior year of high school was spent in the Holy Land due, in large part, to a great uncle who set aside funds for any of his great nephews and nieces to study in Israel. Our class had five weeks of intensive daily *Ulpan* before being placed with families from the *Eidot HaMizrah* in the *Mateh Yehudah* region of Jerusalem. I count the Maimon's among my closest ‘family’, that is, the family one chooses.

Upon my return from that transformative year of study and exploration in *Eretz Yisrael*, my parents proudly brought me back to *shul*. Suddenly, the prayer book seemed to come alive for me. This set me on a course of increasing Jewish involvement and activism at UMass Amherst, followed by the Cantorial School at the Jewish Theological Seminary. These are just a few of the steps in my Jewish journey. In Port Chester, NY, Farmington Hills, MI, and now in Elkins Park, PA, I have been blessed to work with rabbis with immense passion and deep scholarship. Each has influenced me and encouraged me to learn text more deeply and share the wisdom I glean from our rabbinic sources.

Since 2004, I have served as Hazzan at Congregation Adath Jeshurun in Elkins Park, PA and five years ago, the shul leadership requested that I seek *semikhah*. In my search for appropriate schools, I found a new appreciation for the phrase, “I didn’t know what I didn’t know.” Now to find the appropriate school that would help fill the spaces and teach me not THE answers, but where to seek and identify possible answers and perhaps even sharpen the questions.

The Cantors to Rabbis program of AJR has been a blessing beyond expectation. Here I found caring guidance paired with real intellectual challenge. This has served as a natural extension of where I was intellectually and spiritually upon arrival and motivated me forward. The friendships I have made with fellow students, professors, and administrators are ones I value and expect will continue into my rabbinate/cantorate.

Howard K. Glantz, *Hazzan*
Cantors to Rabbis Program



PLEASE SUPPORT AJR!

Partner with us in encouraging and shaping communities that are built on pluralistic dialogue and understanding.

Partner with us in training the leaders that the Jewish world needs today.

Partner with us in spreading our message of cherishing those with whom we agree as well as those who challenge us.

Consider donating stock or donating from your IRA.
Contact office@ajr.edu for details.



**In loving
memory
of Rabbi
Yitzchak Mann,
z”l**

**Loved by his
AJR students
and faculty
colleagues**

**Distinguished
son of the
Jewish people**

His memory is a blessing.





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