SUNDAY, JUNE 28 / 6 Tamuz

Day's Theme: Overview

7:30 AM (PDT)
10:30 AM (EDT)
5:30 PM (Israel)
Introduction and Orientation

8:00 AM (PDT)
11:00 AM (EDT)
6:00 PM (Israel)
Choice:

Balancing Personal, Communal and Universal Identities in the Age of "Me"
Meesh Hammer-Kossoy

We tend to perceive Jewish tradition as prioritizing communal identity, expressed through commitment, dedication and self-sacrifice on behalf of Jewish peoplehood over personal and universal identities. Our modern world, on the other hand, tends to put a premium on actualizing individual identities--be they personal or professional. When stepping beyond the individual, communal identities are often dismissed as mere "tribalism" whereas universalism is elevated as an expression of lofty morality. In this session, we will explore the wisdom of some great Jewish modern thinkers - Rav Yitzhak Hutner (the Pahad Yitzhak), the Slonimer Rebbe, Rav Shalom Noah Berozovsky (Netivot Shalom), and Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks to help us mine the best of our tradition and find a healthy balance.

Religious Identity in the Post-Modern World
Mike Feuer

The loss of grounded narratives and emergence of new models of identity are hallmarks of postmodern thought. Rav Shimshon Gershon Rosenberg is one of the few contemporary Jewish thinkers to engage postmodernism directly, and he may be the only one to see its blessing. This class will explore his thoughts on faith and identity in our postmodern world.

9:30 AM (PDT)
12:30 PM (EDT)
7:30 PM (Israel)
Break (with additional options)

10:00 AM (PDT)
1:00 PM (EDT)
Special Lecture:

8:00 PM (Israel) **Defending Identity**
Natan Sharansky

Who is better prepared to confront challenges and defend principles in a volatile modern world? Those with strong national, religious, ethnic, or tribal identities who accept democracy, or democrats who renounce identity as a kind of divisive prejudice? In his book, Natan Sharansky, building on his personal experience as a dissident, claims that valueless cosmopolitanism, even in democracies, is dangerous. Better to have hostile identities framed by democracy than democrats indifferent to identity. Democracy and freedom are too weak on their own to protect the citizen. In the modern state, another ingredient, identity, is indispensable sable to their success.

11:30 AM (PDT) **Break (with additional options)**
2:30 PM (EDT)
9:30 PM (Israel)

12:00 PM (PDT) **Choice:**
3:00 PM (EDT)
10:00 PM (Israel) **The Jewish Calendar: Universality vs. Particularity**
Michael Hattin

The Jewish calendar is based upon integrating a complex arrangement of lunar and solar motion. We will explore some of its intricacies as we probe a fundamental question of Jewish identity: how can we resolve the tension between our distinctiveness as a people on the one hand and our aspirations for universal fellowship on the other?

Sexual Identity and Intersectionality
Nechama Goldman Barash

Traditional Judaism is binary. Everything breaks down to gender in terms of mitzvot, synagogue and community. Sexuality is purely a vehicle for marital heterosexuality between two fully Jewish members of the community. Where does that leave us? An increasing number of Jews intermarry and a large majority engage in non-marital sex. LGBTQ Jews are looking to Jewish ritual and text to find sanctity in their sexual relationships despite the complex Biblical texts that seem to prohibit. Can such a gendered religious tradition cross over? We will engage in critical text study to try and mine from the sources relevant and deeper meanings to provide value to the sexual identity and sexual behavior that engage Jews today.

MONDAY, JUNE 29 / 7 TAMUZ

Day's Theme: Self and Other

7:30 AM (PDT) **Reflections**
10:30 AM (EDT)
5:30 PM (Israel)

8:00 AM (PDT) **Choice:**
11:00 AM (EDT)
6:00 PM (Israel) **The Madwoman in the Rabbi's Attic**
Gila Fine

Why are shrews always so vicious? How did the ancient world view the male/female body? And what possessed Yalta to smash 400 bottles of her husband's wine? The comic tale of Yalta, read through Aristotle and Euripides, William Shakespeare and William Congreve, Charlotte Brontë and Jean Rhys, Adrienne Rich and R. Kook.

Challenging our Sensibilities and Clarifying our Identities: The Story of Yehudah and Tamar
Howard Markose

In this session, we will examine the story of Judah and Tamar (Genesis 38) and discover some very challenging family intrigue which brings Judah and his daughter-in-law together in quite unusual circumstances. Through our intensive analysis of the story and the characters of this biblical text, we will hopefully get a better understanding of our own personal identity.

9:30 AM (PDT) **Break (with additional options)**
12:30 PM (EDT)
7:30 PM (Israel)

10:00 AM (PDT) **Choice:**
1:00 PM (EDT)
8:00 PM (Israel) **A Tale of Love and Liberation**
Gila Fine

Why is the Bible so afraid of love? Who were the lovers who saved the Jewish People in Egypt? And how do the rabbis deconstruct one of the greatest myths of their time? A reading of Midrash Tanhuma (Pekudei 9), through Ovid, Maharal, the Brothers Grimm and Jacques Lacan, George Orwell and Erich Fromm.

Am I My Job
Zvi Hirschfield

Together we will explore Jewish sources that talk about the tensions between professional responsibilities and aspirations, and the other important dimensions of our lives. We will also think about how to prioritize job opportunities with other needs such as family, geography, community and other life demands.

11:30 AM (PDT) **Break (with additional options)**
2:30 PM (EDT)
9:30 PM (Israel)

12:00 PM (PDT) **Choice:**
3:00 PM (EDT)
10:00 PM (Israel) **Being Me Without Negating You: Makhloket Matters**
Punishment or Prevention - How to Deal with Crime
Sefi Kraut

People tend to agree that leaders have a duty to protect their citizens. But to whom and how should that protection be extended? What is the appropriate leadership response when some citizens are a threat to the safety of others? We will explore different ways that our texts relate to crime prevention and violence and how these positions are reflected in explosive contemporary debates. Using classical Jewish texts, social psychology, and contemporary conflicts, we will explore how constructive disagreement, as opposed to pushing people apart, can be a way to form productive and meaningful relationships.

The Search for Authenticity
Yiscah Smith

In the Jewish tradition authentic living is a spiritual practice that we cultivate and is actually essential to the spiritual Jewish way of living. However, what do we mean by authenticity? What are we searching for? What parts of ourselves fall within the practice of cultivating authentic living? We shall explore two verses in Deuteronomy 29:9-10 that provide an answer and teach to the textured, diverse and complex expression of authentic living. "You are standing today, all of you before HaShem, your God: your heads, your tribes, your elders and your officers, all the men of Israel; your small children, your women, and your stranger who is in the midst of your camp, from the hewer of your wood to the drawer of your water."

TUESDAY, JUNE 30 / 8 Tamuz

Day's Theme: Gender and Sexuality

7:30 AM (PDT) **Reflections**
10:30 AM (EDT)
5:30 PM (Israel)

8:00 AM (PDT) **Choice:**
11:00 AM (EDT)
6:00 PM (Israel) **The Search for Intimacy in a Post-Gender World**
Dov Berkovits

The whole book of Genesis centers on the life of a family as the building block of human life in the eyes of the Creator of the world. The "tree of life" in a family is the sharing of the physical, emotional and spiritual experience of a man and a woman who build together the gift of intimacy. In a culture zealous to protect an ideology of gender equality, many young men and women yearn for that blessing but are unable to find the key to the treasure of a shared life of intimacy. We will discuss the story of Gan Eden and the rich fabric of midrash that it engendered in our own search for that key.

The Midwives of Egypt and the Road to Redemption: Women Discovering Self and the Divine
Judy Klitsner

We will compare the biblical story of building the world's largest structure—the tower of Babel—with the tale of subjugation and heroism in Egypt, noting the centrality of personal identity in both stories. In the Exodus story, our focus will be on outstanding female characters (the midwives, as well as several heroic "daughters"), whose strong sense of identity helps to repair the fractured connection with the divine and helps catalyze the redemption process.

9:30 AM (PDT) **Break (with additional options)**
12:30 PM (EDT)
7:30 PM (Israel)

10:00 AM (PDT) **Choice:**
1:00 PM (EDT)

8:00 PM (Israel) **Women Leading from Personal to National Identity: From The Daughters of Egypt to the Daughters of Tzelaphechad**
Judy Klitsner

In a sequel to the story of the courageous "daughters" of Egypt, the daughters of Tzelafchad stand up to all leadership symbols and figures, bringing about unexpected changes in law and in attitudes toward outsiders. In a close examination of their story—which we will contrast with the story of the spies sent to scout out the land-- we will note themes of personal identity, gender identity and the transition from personal identity to communal and national identity.

Can Halakha Meet the Needs of the Religious Gay Community
Rahel Berkovits

What is a halakhically religious person to do who desires love, sexual intimacy and partnership with someone of their own gender? In this *shuir* we will examine the views of some of the leaders of the national religious camp in Israel. R. Shlomo Riskin, R. Yaakov Medan, R. Benny Lau, and R. Yuval Cherlow all grapple with this modern challenge. How they understand the function of halakha in general and what specific suggestions and answers they give to this question will be openly examined and discussed. This class aims to be a safe space for all people.

11:30 AM (PDT) **Break (with additional options)**
2:30 PM (EDT)
9:30 PM (Israel)

12:00 PM (PDT) **Choice:**
3:00 PM (EDT)
10:00 PM (Israel) **The Balance of Sexual Harms as a Basis for Gender Identity**
Elisha Ancselovits

This class starts with a genetic reality. Even as *most* humans always have fit into two easy biological categories of heterosexual men and women, the genome is a puzzle of pieces and so *some* humans always have not fit these categories. Yet, different cultures have made different choices about how to address these two points of humanity's genetic reality. In this class, we will posit that different cultures' choices are based on which sexual harms each society finds it most pressing to address. Therefore, we will

examine how classical Jewish sources have identified and balanced the range of sexual harms - in order to help us reflect on the question of gender identity.

Does Halakha Have to be Gender Binary
Nechama Goldman Barash

We will focus on the differences between men and women in rabbinic Judaism as manifested in both familial and communal space. We will talk about different Jewish responses to feminism including about prayer services and ordination and how transgender people will potentially force the whole system to undergo significant change.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 1 / 9 Tamuz

Day's Theme: Jewish/Religious

7:30 AM (PDT) **Reflections**
10:30 AM (EDT)
5:30 PM (Israel)

8:00 AM (PDT) **Choice:**
11:00 AM (EDT)
6:00 PM (Israel) **Commandment, Choice and the Challenges of our Age**
Alex Israel

We live in a world of choice. How does that impact our Judaism, a religion that we are born into, that we do not choose? Through a study of the biblical character of Jethro as one of Chumash's exemplary characters and a look at his descendants, we shall probe the challenges of commitment and choice in a world of universalism and social-justice.
Bivracha,

Unity and Uniformity in the Ingathering of the Exiles: A Case Study of Ethiopian Aliya
Meesh Hammer-Kossoy

Rarely has the flag of Jewish unity been flown as proudly as in the heroic airlifts of Ethiopian Jews in Operations Moses and Solomon in the 1980's and 90's. But the acceptance of Ethiopian Jews, with practices very divergent from traditional halakha opens all sorts of challenges for the uniformity of Jewish practice; or does it? And what are the implications for the legitimacy of liberal Jews worldwide? In this session, we will learn about Ethiopian Jewry's struggle for recognition, as well as their practices and the identity politics that follow.

9:30 AM (PDT) **Break (with additional options)**
12:30 PM (EDT)
7:30 PM (Israel)

10:00 AM (PDT) **Choice:**
1:00 PM (EDT)
8:00 PM (Israel) **Language and Identity**
Leah Rosenthal

In this session we will study a section from Mishnah, Tractate Sotah, and its accompanying Talmudic commen- tary, discovering an ancient discussion replete with modern,

contemporary issues. We will discuss questions of multi-culturalism, individual and communal identity constructions, and questions of cultural forms and content. We will discover that many of the critical questions Jewish individuals, communities and institutions are debating today, were discussed by the Rabbis of the Mishnah and Talmud centuries ago.

Balancing Self With an All-Encompassing G-d
Mike Feuer

Rav Kook lived in the tension between a deep awareness of selfhood and an almost overwhelming belief in the embracing nature of the Divine. This class will examine a few of his writings with the goal of understanding these two perspectives and exploring what type of religious identity might emerge from their meeting.

11:30 AM (PDT) **Break (with additional options)**
2:30 PM (EDT)
9:30 PM (Israel)

12:00 PM (PDT) **Choice:**
3:00 PM (EDT)
10:00 PM (Israel) **The Stories We Tell About Ourselves: Jewish History and Jewish Memory**
David Bernstein

Every person and every nation has its own narrative(s) that make up the core of one's identity/ identities. Using a series of ancient and modern sources, this session will focus on how our tradition relates to our history and our memory. How does one create a firm identity? How does one avoid getting stuck in the past?

Becoming a Servant of G-d
Meir Schweiger

The title “Servant of G-d” is restricted to a limited number of individuals in the Tanakh, and for most, is the essence of their identity. What qualities do these people need to possess to earn such a reputation? In our session, we will study two personalities - Avraham and Moshe and see how each one of them needed to go through a transformative process before he could deserve this title.

THURSDAY, JULY 2/ 10 TAMUZ

Day's Theme: Jewish/Nationality

7:30 AM (PDT)
10:30 AM (EDT)
5:30 PM (Israel) **Reflections**

8:00 AM (PDT)
11:00 AM (EDT)
6:00 PM (Israel) **Choice:**

Sephardi or Ashkenazi: The Battle Over Prayer Rites in the State of Israel:
Levi Cooper

The Almighty desires the heart … alas, prayer continues to be a battleground for communal narratives, individuality, and evolving notions of gender. We will take a step back in time to the nascent State of Israel, and track how seventy years of debates over *nusach ha'tefila*, prayer rites, reflect competing visions of the future of the Jewish People. We will conclude our journey, by pondering why the seemingly innocuous issue of prayer rights has served as a lightning rod for key questions of identity, particularly in Israel.

Hatikva: Conflicting Approaches to National Freedom
Tovah Leah Nachmani

The hope and vision of the Jewish nation, "to be a free nation in our land" invites us into a heated discussion about freedom - its aims and its limits. We will consider our national mission of freedom through the lenses, stories, poems and struggles of three great Zionist thinkers, in an attempt to reconsider our own identification with Hatikva.

9:30 AM (PDT)
12:30 PM (EDT)
7:30 PM (Israel) **Break (with additional options)**

10:00 AM (PDT)
1:00 PM (EDT)
8:00 PM (Israel) **Choice:**

Jewish Identity and the Law of Return
Leon Morris

Jewish peoplehood and Jewish religion are uniquely intertwined. When Israel adopted the Law of Return in 1950, allowing every Jew the opportunity for automatic citizenship, it affirmed the notion of Israel as a Jewish and democratic

state. But the question of *who* or *what* is a Jew was never fully resolved. What happens when religion and national identity are separated? Is there a way in which a Jew of no religion, or a Jew who has converted to another religion is still to be considered a Jew for purposes of citizenship in the Jewish state? Ten years after the establishment of Israel, David Ben Gurion solicited opinions from 50 of the wisest Jews in the world. Along with several classic sources, we will read and discuss a few of the responses to Ben Gurion and revisit a Supreme Court landmark decision in an attempt to formulate a definition of Jewish identity for the 21st century.

Made to Measure
Michael Hattin

The clothing that we wear says much about our cultural identity, our values and our beliefs. As such, clothing can be unifying - connecting us to those who dress like us, or divisive -separating us from others who don't. Jewish tradition preserves a lively discussion about the place of clothing in articulating who we are and what we stand for, as human beings, as a people and as individuals. Our studies will focus on a number of celebrated Biblical contexts and their later elaboration in Rabbinic and Halakhic literature.

11:30 AM (PDT) **Break (with additional options)**
2:30 PM (EDT)
9:30 PM (Israel)

12:00 PM (PDT) **Choice:**
3:00 PM (EDT)
10:00 PM (Israel) **Site Visit: Mt. Herzl Cemetery**
Multiple Identities in Israel
David Bernstein

The military cemetery on Mt. Herzl is not only a composite of the history of Israel's conflicts; it is also a monument to identity, of the individuals buried there as well as of national identity. The memorialization reflects the values of the country, some of which have changed over the 70+ years of statehood. We will tell some of the individual stories as we uncover the elements that reflect the national identity as well.