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## Fall 2009 Course Offerings

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BALTIMORE  
BOARD OF RABBIS



# 61st Annual Adult Institute of Jewish Studies

ALL NEW COURSES!

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Tuesday Evenings

October 13, 20, 27 and November 3, 2009

**Baltimore Hebrew Congregation**

7401 Park Heights Avenue

Pikesville, MD 21208

*Made possible by a generous grant  
from Sol Levinson and Bros.*

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*“Learning, learning, learning —  
that is the secret of Jewish survival.”*

*—Abad Ha'am*

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*The Adult Institute of Jewish Studies is unique in the U.S. because it brings together Jewish adults spanning the spectrum of communal life, young and old, to study with some of Baltimore's best rabbinic minds. The Institute's faculty comprises voices from each of the major streams of American Jewish life. Each is committed to promoting klal yisrael, the integrity and cohesiveness of Jewish Baltimore.*

*The Adult Institute offers a wide range of stimulating courses including ancient and modern Jewish history, Hebrew literature and culture, Biblical prose, Talmudic commentary, and contemporary issues. Twenty-three faculty members offer you nearly 20 courses from which to choose. There is something for everyone! This year we proudly offer three NEW dual-session courses for students who want to explore subjects in more depth.*

*Quench your thirst for knowledge and learning. Join hundreds of fellow Baltimore Jews for four delightful evenings of soul-satisfying nourishment!*

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*“The Institute is a splendid opportunity for the community to get together to learn. I love the vitality it always shows.”*

*– Rabbi Avram Israel Reisner*

## Message From Rabbi Steven M. Fink President, Baltimore Board of Rabbis

Dear Friends,



Welcome to the Baltimore Board of Rabbis' Institute of Adult Jewish Studies. To the best of our knowledge, there is nothing like our Institute anywhere else in America.

Other communities may offer periodic adult learning opportunities, but nowhere else has a Board of Rabbis sponsored such a broad-based program enjoying such longevity. Reform, Reconstructionist, Conservative, and Orthodox rabbis teach in the Institute, making it the only program in Baltimore that connects the entire spectrum of our Jewish community through Jewish learning. In a time when there are divisive forces at work in our community, the breadth and depth of the Adult Institute reminds us that Torah brings together Jews of all backgrounds and perspectives.

The Institute attracts the most interested, learned and well read members of our community. The adults who study with us are committed and curious Jews who attend our classes to broaden and deepen their Jewish knowledge. It is a privilege for your rabbis to participate as partners with you in such a worthy and significant endeavor.

Rabbi Nehorai once said (*Pirke Avot 4:14*), "Leave home and go to a place of Torah. Don't say that Torah will come to you or that your companions will make it yours. Don't depend on your own understanding." Rabbi Nehorai suggests that we should travel to scholars rather than hope that scholars will come to us. He insists that we study with others for more complete understanding. The Adult Institute enables us to study Torah within our own community with our local rabbinic scholars. It helps us plumb the depths of Torah with the help of our rabbis. This is the opportunity to study Torah. The time for study is now. May your studies provide you with spiritual sustenance and intellectual nourishment.

Enjoy our classes!

L'shalom,  
Rabbi Steven M. Fink, D. Min., D.D.  
President, Baltimore Board of Rabbis

# *Todah rabbah!*

*Thank you for generously supporting  
The Baltimore Board of Rabbis and the  
61st Annual Adult Institute of Jewish Studies*

## **Builders**

**Sol Levinson & Bros., Inc.**

## **Scholars**

Courses by Rabbis Dana Saroken and David Greenspoon are sponsored by Beth El Congregation to help Baltimore Jews study *Torah* together

In honor of all who study and teach *Torah*  
By Chizuk Amuno Congregation

## **Benefactors**

Baltimore Hebrew Congregation celebrates  
the communal study of *Torah*

Temple Oheb Shalom is proud to sponsor this year's Institute

Ner Tamid is proud to sponsor Rabbi Landau's class  
in celebration of Baltimore's Jews engaging in the  
mitzvah of *Torah* study

Honoring the work of the Institute  
and celebrating our own journey toward a more  
complete and fulfilling Jewish life  
Scott and Janet Shindell

In Memory of  
Maimon M. Cohen and Solomon Milgrome  
By Barbara Cohen and Neri Cohen and Family

## **Patrons**

James and Mildred Blum

## **Supporters**

Mr. Barry Hond & Rosalind Pearlman  
Judy & Jerry Macks • Ada & Sig Bloom  
Rhona Stein • Ingeborg Weinberger • Lee Weinstock

## Meet our Fantastic Faculty

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**Rabbi Elan Adler,**  
**Moses Montefiore-Anshe Emunah**  
**Hebrew Congregation**  
*BA, Rhode Island College; Ordination,*  
*Yeshiva Univ.*



**Rabbi Geoff Basik,**  
**Congregation Kol Halev**  
*BA, Univ. of Maryland; MA, Johns Hopkins*  
*School of Advanced International Studies;*  
*MAHL and Ordination, Reconstructionist*  
*Rabbinical College*



**Rabbi Elizabeth Bolton,**  
**Beit Tikvah Congregation**  
*BFA, Concordia Univ.; MHL, Ordination,*  
*Reconstructionist Rabbinical College*



**Rabbi Andrew Busch,**  
**Baltimore Hebrew Congregation**  
*BA, Brandeis Univ.; MAHL and Ordination,*  
*Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of*  
*Religion, Cincinnati*



**Rabbi Nina Beth Cardin,**  
**Baltimore Jewish Environmental Network**  
*Ordination, Jewish Theological Seminary*



**Rabbi Steven M. Fink,**  
**Temple Oheb Shalom**  
*BA, Franklin and Marshall College; MAHL,*  
*Ordination, Hebrew Union College-Jewish*  
*Institute of Religion; PhD, McCormick*  
*Theological Seminary*



**Dr. Barry Freundel,**  
**Baltimore Hebrew Institute at**  
**Towson University**  
*BA, Yeshiva Univ.; BS, Erna Michael College*  
*of Hebraic Studies; MS, Bernard Revel*  
*Graduate School; Ordination, RIETS, Yeshiva*  
*Univ.; PhD, Baltimore Hebrew Univ.*



**Susanna Garfein,**  
**Baltimore Hebrew Institute**  
**at Towson University**  
*BA, Univ. of Georgia; MA, PhD, Johns Hopkins Univ.*



**Barry M. Gittlen,**  
**Baltimore Hebrew Institute**  
**at Towson University**  
*PhD, Monteith College, Wayne State Univ.;  
PhD, Univ. of Pennsylvania*



**Rabbi Jay Goldstein,**  
**Beth Israel Congregation**  
*BA, Univ. of Wisconsin; MA, Ordination,  
Jewish Theological Seminary*



**Rabbi David Greenspoon,**  
**Assistant Rabbi, Beth El Congregation**  
*BA, Albert A. List College; MA and  
Ordination, Jewish Theological Seminary*



**Rabbi Floyd Herman,**  
**Emeritus, Har Sinai Congregation**  
*BA, Univ. of Cincinnati; Ordination, Hebrew  
Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion*



**Rabbi Jon Konheim,**  
**Beth Am Congregation**  
*BA, Carleton College, Northfield, MN;  
MAHL and Ordination, Hebrew Union  
College-Jewish Institute of Religion*



**Rabbi Chaim Landau,**  
**Ner Tamid Congregation**  
*MA, Smichah, Jews College London;  
MA Law, Univ. of London; Smichah,  
Jerusalem Rabbinate*



**Rabbi Scott Nagel**  
**Temple Oheb Shalom**  
*BA, Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor; MHL,  
Ordination, Hebrew Union College-Jewish  
Institute of Religion, Cincinnati*



**Rabbi Jonathan Panitz,**  
**Bolton Street Synagogue**  
*BS, New York Univ.; BHL, Hebrew Union  
College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-  
JIR); MA, Providence College; MA, Catholic  
Univ; MBA, Univ. of Phoenix; Smichah, Leo  
Baeck College, Jewish Theological Seminary*



**Rabbi Avram Israel Reisner,**  
**Chevrei Tzedek Congregation**  
*AB, Columbia Univ.; BHL, MA, Ordination,  
Jewish Theological Seminary; MA, Univ. of  
Pennsylvania*



**Rabbi Gila Ruskin,**  
**Harford Jewish Center**  
*BA, Univ. of Maryland-Balt. Cty; MAHL,  
Ordination, Hebrew Union College*



**Rabbi Dana Saroken,**  
**Assistant Rabbi, Beth El Congregation**  
*BA, Univ. of Arizona; Ordination, Jewish  
Theological Seminary*



**Rabbi Jerry Seidler,**  
**Chaplain, LifeBridge Health**  
*BA, Univ. of Pennsylvania; JD, Vanderbilt  
Univ. School of Law; MAHL and Ordination,  
Reconstructionist Rabbinical College*



**Dr. Shimon Shokek,**  
**Baltimore Hebrew Institute  
at Towson University**  
*BA, MA, PhD, Hebrew University of Jerusalem;*



**Rabbi Ron Shulman,**  
**Chizuk Amuno Congregation**  
*BA, Brandeis Univ.; MA, Univ. of Judaism;  
Ordination, Jewish Theological Seminary*



**Rabbi Alan Yuter,**  
**B'nai Israel Congregation**  
*BA, Temple Univ.; BHL, Gratz College; MA,  
Hunter College; MHL, Ordination, Jewish  
Theological Seminary; Ordination, Hebrew  
Theological College; Ordination, Chief Rabbi  
of Israel; PhD, New York Univ.*

# Fall 2009 Course Offerings

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## COURSE LEGEND

### *Teaching style:*

L-Lecture    T-Text based    I-Interactive

### *Teaching level:*

B-Beginner    IN-Intermediate    A-Advanced

## **NEW! DUAL SESSION COURSES!**

**7:30-9:15 p.m. (15 minute break at 8:15 p.m.)**

### **#1 Four Tales From The *Zohar***

**Rabbi David Greenspoon**

**(T, B)**

The *Zohar* is not one book, but a group of books that has been called “the most important literary work” of *Kabbalah* or Jewish mysticism. By studying just four Jewish stories in translation, we will quickly be introduced to the world-view and values of the medieval *kabbalists*. You’ll gain a window into mystical discussions whose origins trace back to the 2nd century. No prior experience in the *Zohar* is expected.

*Week 1: Introduction to the Zohar and “The Magic of Midnight”*

*Week 2: “Love in the Afterlife”*

*Week 3: “Death Postponed”*

*Week 4: “A Tale of Sin and Repentance”*

### **#2 A Taste of Judaism**

**Rabbi Avram Reisner**

**(L, T, I / B, IN)**

Ever thought of studying the breadth of Judaism while “standing on one foot”? In this course you can! Why DO we eat dairy on *Shavuot*? Is Rosh Hashana really the beginning of the New Year? What is the importance of a *brit milah* or the significance of a *chupah*? Why has the *Torah* been the basis of our tradition for 3000 years? What does the *Mishnah* have to do with anything? What do Jews believe about G-d, the afterlife? Bring the questions you have always wanted to ask!

*Week 1: Jewish Holidays and the Calendar*

*Week 2: Jewish Lifecycle Events*

*Week 3: Jewish Sources*

*Week 4: Jewish Beliefs*

### **#3 “What Can Jews Believe In” in the 21st Century?**

**Rabbi Geoffrey Basik, Rabbi Floyd Herman,  
Rabbi Chaim Landau, Rabbi Ron Shulman**  
(L, I / B, IN, A)

Between fundamentalism of all stripes and the new “militant atheism”, where can a modern Jew stand? Is it possible for Jews today to successfully sustain their Jewish identity without articulating what they as Jews and Judaism believe? Today, Jews seem to be questioning core beliefs and values, and engaging in intra-personal dialogues. In that context our panel of four rabbis, representing diverse religious thinking, beliefs, and practices, will reflect publicly on a few of these key theological questions in a very personal way. Come listen and respond to this lively, provocative and stimulating discussion about G-d, Torah and Israel.

*Week 1: Does Belief In G-d Make a Difference In My Life?*

*Week 2: Why Pray?*

*Week 3: Do The Torah's Origins Really Matter?*

*Week 4: Is 'Chosenness' Compatible With Multi-culturalism?*

**Session One 7:30-8:15 p.m.**

### **#4 Real-life and Relevance:**

#### **Reconstructionist Judaism Responds**

**Rabbi Elizabeth Bolton**

(L, I / B, IN, A)

Have these questions or issues ever occurred to you? Even if you think you have some answers, you'll enjoy Rabbi Bolton's lively interactive style and current research and discourse on each of these timely subjects.

*Week 1: Tattoos and Piercings: Where, What and Why?*

*Week 2: Sex, Gender and Sexuality*

*Week 3: Size Matters: Synagogue vs. Havurah*

*Week 4: What's In a Name? G-d, G-d, god*

### **#5 Jewish Poetry & Our Lives**

**Rabbi Andrew Busch**

(T, I / B, IN)

Jewish poetry is a literary art form as old as the Jewish people. Join us in reading and responding to a wide range of writers and styles, periods and topics. We may find our own struggles and joys reflected in the words of the Biblical Psalms, the medieval Halevi, the modern Amichai and others.

## #6 The Jews of Turkey

Rabbi Steven Fink

(L, IN / B, IN, A)

Jews have lived in modern day Turkey for over 2,400 years. They have lived in peace in Turkey since the Spanish Expulsion in 1492, when the Sultan accepted them. As the second largest Jewish community in a Muslim country, Turkish Jewish history, culture, and literature is truly rich. Join us as we examine how they have survived at the nexus of a religious and cultural interchange for centuries.

## #7 Rabbi Akiva: Shepherd, Scholar, Teacher or Revolutionary?

Rabbi Scott Nagel

(T, I / B, IN)

At age 40 Rabbi Akiva suffered a mid-life crisis that left an indelible mark on Judaism. He was one of the greatest scholars of his time. He managed to persevere even as all but 5 of his students died and he was being tortured. Together we'll examine how his teachings altered the course of rabbinic Judaism and why his teachings are still as relevant today as they were in his time.

## #8 Four Out of Five Isn't Bad: A Taste of *Megillot Esther, Ruth, Kohellet* and *Shir Ha'Shirim*

Rabbi Dana Saroken

(T, I / B, IN)

The Bible's *megillot* boast fascinating themes, ideas and story-lines. Our class will explore the multiple issues of heroism, friendship, family relations, passion and love and the much deeper existential issues of the meaning and purpose of life through the lens of our *megillot*. Discover how the writings of four of the five *megillot* speak to us personally and communally today.

## #9 Spiritual Living: Minute By Minute

Rabbi Jerry Seidler

(L, I / B, IN, A)

Many Jews see themselves as spiritual, but not necessarily religious. This class can help you construct a more meaningful life through understanding thoughtful practices of Jewish spirituality: ancient, modern, and eclectic. We will explore traditional and innovative teachings including the mundane (eating and breathing) and the more esoteric (G-d awareness). We will learn, grow and enjoy. *Ta sh'ma*, come and study!

## **#10 Jewish Perspectives on the Purpose of Human Life** Faculty, Baltimore Hebrew Institute at Towson University (L, T / B, IN, A)

Without life, there is no Judaism. But how does Judaism understand the purpose of human life? Moving chronologically, this course will examine the evolving understanding of human life and purpose as presented in Biblical literature, rabbinic texts, and philosophical discourse.

*Week 1: Dr. Barry M. Gittlen – “Human Life and Purpose in Genesis”*

*Week 2: Dr. Susanna Garfein – “Is life truly absurd? The Book of Qohelet”*

*Week 3: Dr. Barry Freundel – “The Human Being in Rabbinic Thought”*

*Week 4: Dr. Shimon Shokek – “Jewish Thought and Philosophy: “Jewish Intellectuality as the Purpose of Life in Maimonides’ ‘Guide of the Perplexed””*

**Session Two 8:30-9:15 p.m.**

## **#11 From Kiddush Cup To Gartel: The Origins & History of Jewish Ritual Objects**

**Rabbi Elan Adler**

(L, IN/ B, IN)

When you gaze at a synagogue gift shop, local Judaica store or at your own personal collection of Judaica, have you ever wondered about how these familiar objects became part of Jewish ceremonial life? Bring your curiosity to this class and get ready to “ooh and ah” as we uncover the origins and mystique of the familiar and unusual.

## **#12 Living Green**

**Rabbi Nina Beth Cardin**

(L, T, I / B, IN, A)

Our society is finally coming to terms with global warming and other environmental issues that impact our planet’s inhabitants. Government and businesses alike urge us to become stewards of Mother Earth. For Jews, that message is rooted in rabbinic teachings. Join us as we explore the ways Judaism encourages us to live sustainably, both spiritually and practically, and why.

## **#13 Rashi, Rambam, Ibn Ezra...Who are these ‘guys’ we hear about so often?**

**Rabbi Jay Goldstein**

(L, I / B, IN)

Sure, you’ve heard their names, but what are these giants’ real claims to fame? Come join us as we study sections from the *Mikraot Gedolot* (transl.in English), which contains their classic commentaries on the Torah. We will examine issues such as: How did our tradition interpret “love your neighbor as yourself” or “an eye for an eye” or “you shall not covet”.

#### #14 Between Us

Rabbi Jon Konheim

(L, T, I / B, IN, A)

The rabbis had some profound and surprising things to say about people's obligations to each other. Each Tuesday evening Rabbi Konheim will examine a different aspect of those commandments and the critical nuances that define our relationships with others. Topics include when is lying permissible; what constitutes a sycophant; when is hate permissible?

#### #15 Jewish Magic & Superstition

Rabbi Jonathan Panitz

(L, T, I / B, IN, A)

Did you know that the expression *mazel tov* is related to a belief in astrology? Did you know that in Judaism there are such things as talismans, amulets, charms, and other curious magical objects, not to mention dream interpretation, medical beliefs, necromancy, and other forms of divination? If you thought you knew Judaism, this course is for you.

#### #16 Three Faces of Solomon & How They Illustrate the Struggles and Triumphs of the Stages of Adulthood

Rabbi Gila Ruskin

(T, I / B, IN, A)

Tradition tells us that King Solomon wrote his three masterpieces (*Song of Songs*, *Proverbs*, and *Ecclesiastes*) at three stages of his adult life. How would they compare to Erik Erikson's stages of human development and to other developmental psychology stage theories? How would they compare to our own experiences as we travel life's journey?

#### #17 The Christian Scripture Through Jewish Eyes

Rabbi Alan Yuter

(T / B)

The intersection of Jews and Christians goes back nearly 2000 years. Have you ever wondered how Jews interpreted texts sacred to their Christian neighbors? This course will survey the *New Testament's Acts, Romans, Galatians and I Corinthians*. Come learn how the religious traditions of the Church and the Synagogue parted ways and why.

#### #18 Secrets of the Soul: An Introduction to Kabbalah

Rabbi Darryl Crystal

(L, T, I / B, IN, A)

Intrigued by Jewish mysticism? Our study of mystical texts (Eng. Transl) includes Ezekiel's visions, the Zohar, Chasidic teachings, and two modernists' writings (Rabbis Art Green and Lawrence Kushner). We will explore mysticism as an inspirational guide for daily life. What is the mystic's vision of God? How was the world created? Why is there evil in the world?

# Adult Institute Committee

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Ada Bloom, *Chair*

Adat Chaim Congregation	<i>Myra Wittik</i>
Baltimore Hebrew Congregation	<i>Sig and Ada Bloom</i>
Baltimore Hebrew Institute at Towson University	<i>Erika Schon</i>
Beit Tikvah Congregation	<i>Megan Smith</i> <i>Larry Smith</i>
Beth Am Synagogue	<i>Georgia Parker</i>
Beth El Congregation	<i>Ed Berkowitz</i> <i>Marlene Siegel</i>
Beth Israel Congregation	<i>Henry Foxman</i>
Beth Shalom of Carroll County	<i>Joan and Robert Block</i>
B'nai Israel Congregation	<i>Frank Boches</i>
Bolton Street Synagogue	<i>Justin King</i>
Chizuk Amuno Congregation	<i>Monica Pats</i>
Congregation Chevrei Tzedek	<i>Barbara Baum</i>
Har Sinai Congregation	<i>William Petok, Ph.D.</i>
Jewish Community Center	<i>Eileen Berman</i>
Moses Montefiore Anshe Emunah Hebrew Congregation	<i>Rosalind Pearlman</i>
Ner Tamid-Greenspring Synagogue	<i>Stanley Hellman</i>
Temple Emanuel	<i>Richard Fishkin</i>
Temple Oheb Shalom	<i>Ruth Gumnitzky</i> <i>Marta Hoffman</i> <i>Nadja Pats</i>
Member-at-large	<i>Barry Hond</i>



Join us at the Institute,  
beginning October 13th  
at 7:30 p.m.



Your *neshama* will thank you!

Now 2 Easy Ways to Register:

**1** On the Web!

Go to: [www.associated.org/adultinstitute](http://www.associated.org/adultinstitute)

**2** By mail!

Mail the registration form and check to:

Baltimore Board of Rabbis  
5750 Park Heights Avenue  
Baltimore, Maryland 21215  
410-843-7403

PLEASE NOTE: Admission tickets for registrations received after October 5 can be picked up at the Will Call desk on opening night, October 13, beginning at 7 p.m.

Popular classes fill early, so register TODAY! Invite a friend to join you for four Tuesday evenings this Fall. Nearly 20 courses taught by Baltimore's best rabbinic minds await you! Don't miss this golden opportunity to learn a lot, *schmooze* a little, and taste the joys of reconnecting with your Jewish heritage.

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“It’s great to see people I haven’t seen in a while and learn new things. The nicest part is the coming together of Jews of all denominations and learning together as Jews.”

—Roz Pearlman