

CONGREGATION



Beth El

Adult Jewish Learning

# BETT

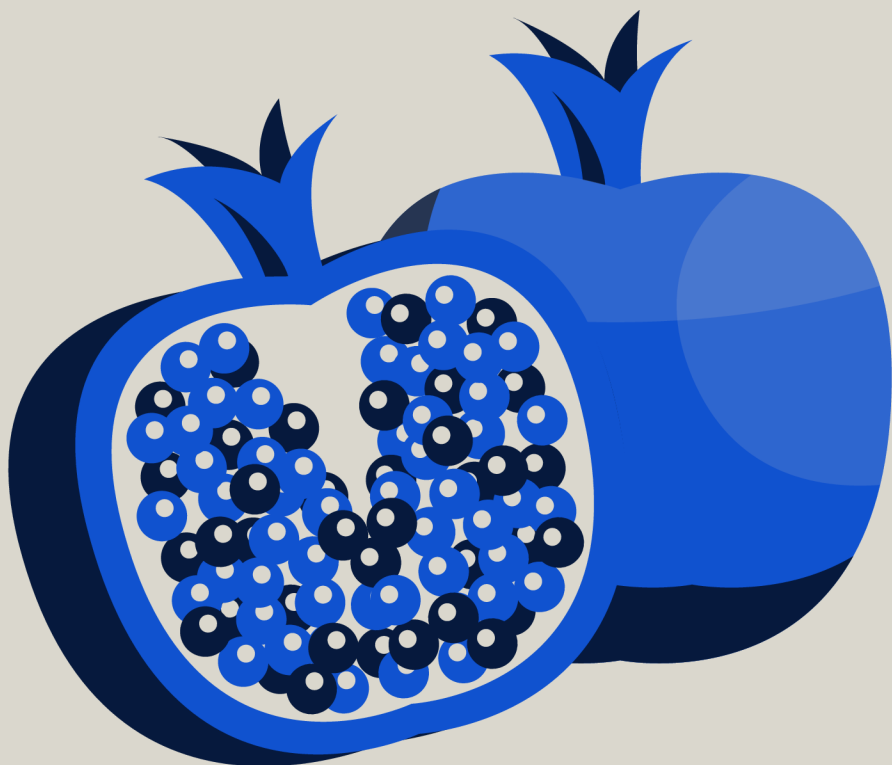
**BETH EL IS TOGETHER**

**BETH EL IS TORAH**

# 5785

**(RE) ENTER AND (RE) NEW  
A COMMUNITY LEARNING  
TOGETHER**

**A COMMUNITY  
CELEBRATING TOGETHER**



# THEMES OF TORAH & TRADITION FOR TODAY

## BEIT THURSDAY COURSES AND SUNDAY SESSIONS WITH RABBI RON SHULMAN

Join us in creating an inclusive learning community. Seek to grow and understand more about Judaism and being Jewish. From whatever your starting point toward whatever your goal.

As we study themes rooted in Torah and Jewish tradition, connecting in person and online, we'll seek relevance and meaning in Judaism for our lives and world today. We'll take up specific subjects reflecting a theme on two Thursday evenings and one Sunday morning each month.

Those who want, can go in-depth. Those who prefer, can take on a bit less and still learn a great deal. Though connected by a theme, each session is unique allowing participants to attend when able. Those who want to attend in person are welcome on campus. Those who prefer to connect from home are welcome on Zoom.

We'll talk about what we believe, and don't. What we practice, and don't. What we know, and don't. What we desire, and don't.

VTS parents, after bringing your children to school, stick around for the monthly Sunday session and grow in your own understandings and feelings about Judaism.

CBE members and friends, take this opportunity to enhance your personal perspectives on aspects of Jewish living, tradition, and ideas.



# 2024-2025 SCHEDULE OF BETT THURSDAY COURSES & SUNDAY SESSIONS

## NOVEMBER 2024

### **Theme: Concepts & Convictions**

Judaism exists in its ideas and its ideals. Today, we seek to be Jews who find meaning and identity in the explanation and application of Judaism's ideas for our lives. In these sessions we will discover insights from some of Judaism's prominent Jewish teachers, past and present. We'll seek definitions for a compelling and relevant Jewish purpose in the 21st century. We'll also ask and discuss our honest questions and those of our children.

**Thursday, 7 p.m.**

**November 7th - Jewish Theology Then**

**November 14th - Jewish Theology Now**

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### **Seeking the Hiding God**

**Dr. Arnold Eisen**

**Scholar-in-Residence Weekend**

**November 15, 16, & 17**

Dr. Arnold Eisen, former Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, returns to Congregation Beth El to premiere his newly published book, *Seeking the Hiding God*, an honest, insightful, and moving personal theological essay.

Dr. Eisen acknowledges that there is little we can know about God's nature; his focus is on the search for the "hiding God," the meaning of fleeting encounters with the Creator, and the acts of justice and compassion that human beings are called to perform as partners of God.

The book invites readers to join the author in asking, perhaps for the first time, what they actually believe about ultimate matters of faith and doubt—and rewards fellow searchers for ultimate meaning with reassurance that the search itself can be a source of personal fulfillment, vibrant community, and great joy.

## **Fall Shabbaton**

### **November 15, 16, & 17**

Community is created when we all join in celebration of our common bond. When we meet one another in moments of learning, celebration, and kindness we discover that we are each precious parts of a dynamic and whole congregation.

**Friday November 15th, 8:00 p.m. following a**

**Community Shabbat Dinner**

**Saturday November 16th, 12:30 p.m. following a**

**Community Shabbat Lunch**

**Sunday November 17th, 10:00 a.m. following a Sunday Brunch**

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### **Friday November 16**

#### **6:15 p.m. Simhah Shabbat in the Sanctuary!**

Our outdoor summer Plaza Prayer moves inside for the fall and becomes "Simhah Shabbat." We'll enjoy a spirited service accompanied on guitar by Craig Parks who joins David Lipsitz and our rabbis for an upbeat Kabbalat Shabbat service. During our service, we'll celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, and happy occasions!

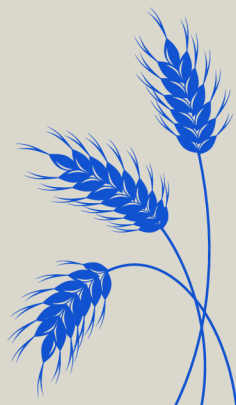
#### **7:00 p.m. Shabbat Dinner**

Following Simhah Shabbat we'll enjoy a Shabbat Dinner buffet and each other's company. Adults and children, families and friends are all welcome.

#### **7:45 p.m. Seeking the Hiding God with Dr. Arnold Eisen**

Following dinner, those wishing to learn our Scholar-in-Residence, Dr. Arnold Eisen, will gather for the first of three weekend sessions.

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## **Saturday November 17**

### **9:30 a.m. Shabbat Morning Service**

We join for prayer, song and reflection, Torah study and reading. Afterwards, the conclusion of our Shabbat Morning Service will feature an interpretive prayer experience

### **11:15 a.m. Hineni! Personal Prayer and Insight**

As we conclude our Shabbat service, Rabbi Shulman will guide us through interpretive moments of traditional and modern prayer helping us to reclaim personal expression in our prayer. You are welcome to attend just for this part of the morning or come earlier to share in our full Shabbat service and/or Torah reading.

### **11:45 a.m. Kiddush and Shabbat Lunch**

Following our service, we'll enjoy Shabbat lunch before our second session with Dr. Arnold Eisen.

### **12:30 p.m. Seeking the Hiding God with Dr. Arnold Eisen**

Following lunch we continue to learn with our Scholar-in-Residence, Dr. Arnold Eisen.

## **Sunday November 17, 10:00 a.m.**

### **Sunday Brunch & Guest Speaker**

Seeking the Hiding God with Dr. Arnold Eisen

Our third session with Scholar-in-Residence, Dr. Arnold Eisen.



# DECEMBER 2024

Theme: To Be Apart or A part

As Jews, we are, we want to be, we need to be both a part of the larger society in which we live, and set apart from it in the distinctive, particularism of Jewish identity and experience.

This month, we'll explore this push-pull of being Jewish by exploring our relationship to Israel as Diaspora Jews. We'll also look into the history and lore of Hanukkah for insights about what it means to be Jewish in a non-Jewish world.

**Thursday, 7:00 p.m.**

**December 5th – Diaspora Zionism in History**

**December 12th – Diaspora Zionism Today**

**Sunday, 10 a.m.**

**December 8th – Hanukkah**

**Saturday, 12:30 p.m.**

**December 21st - Torah Study Lunch**

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**Sunday December 15th, 10:00 a.m.**

**Sunday Brunch & Guest Speaker**

**The Current Jewish Moment in Context (and on Campus)**

**Rabbi David Wolpe**

Rabbi David Wolpe is the Max Webb Emeritus Rabbi of Sinai Temple. He serves as the ADL's inaugural rabbinic fellow and a scholar in residence at the Maimonides Fund. Rabbi Wolpe has taught at Harvard, the Jewish Theological Seminary, the American Jewish University, Hunter College, and UCLA. Rabbi Wolpe has published widely, including in The New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Washington Post, Time, Newsweek and The Atlantic. He has been featured on The Today Show, Face the Nation, ABC This Morning, and CBS This Morning as well as series on PBS, A&E, History Channel, and Discovery Channel.

# JANUARY 2025

## **Theme: Life Milestones & Observances**

Jewish ritual and values embrace us at our lives' liminal moments, moments of transition that mark both an ending and a beginning. At each stage, we seek to infuse these precious moments with personal meaning and Jewish significance.

**Thursday, 7:00 p.m.**

### **January 23rd - Aging**

How Judaism understands growing older and living wiser.

### **January 30th - Healing**

Gleaning spiritual strength when we are physically weak.

**Sunday, 10 a.m.**

### **January 26th - Grief & Bereavement**

How Jewish religious values and ritual practices support us and our loved ones when we encounter death.

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# FEBRUARY 2025

## **Theme: Jewish Sacred Sources**

Judaism finds its roots in a variety of biblical, rabbinic, medieval and contemporary sources. The Bible, Talmud, Midrashic literature, legal, liturgical, philosophical, and poetic texts inspire and inform who we are and what we do as Jews from ancient days to today. This month, we'll explore the Hebrew Bible as the first sacred source of the Jewish people.

**Thursday, 7:00 p.m.**

**February 20th** - Religious Authority in Torah

**February 27th** - Moral Authority in the Hebrew Prophets

**Sunday, 10 a.m.**

**March 2nd** - Social Authority in the Book of Esther as we approach Purim

**Saturday, 12:30 p.m.**

**February 1st** - Torah Study Lunch

# MARCH & APRIL 2025

## **Theme: Sources of Jewish Spirituality**

Many of us are curious. We may or may not be “religious,” yet we sense about ourselves spiritual curiosity and interest. Come explore the nature of spirituality in Judaism. Where it comes from and how we understand and experience it. As an example, we’ll also prepare for and frame our Passover celebration through spiritual insights and practices.

**Thursday, 7:00 p.m.**

**March 20th - Mitzvah** - Commandment

**March 27th - Kavanah** - Intention

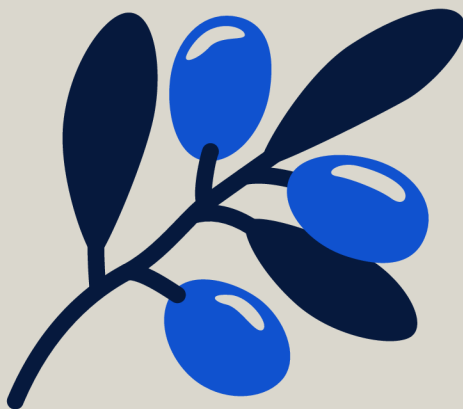
**April 3rd - Celebration:** Practical Spirituality and Preparation for Passover

**Saturday, 12:30 p.m.**

**April 5th** - Torah Study Lunch

**Sunday, 10 a.m.**

**April 6th** - Spiritual Ideas and Values in the Passover Haggadah



# HOME STUDY GROUPS

Dear Friends,

Are you interested in discovering and discussing Judaism on your own terms? Would you enjoy getting together with a few friends and neighbors who also want to learn and explore? I invite you to invite me!

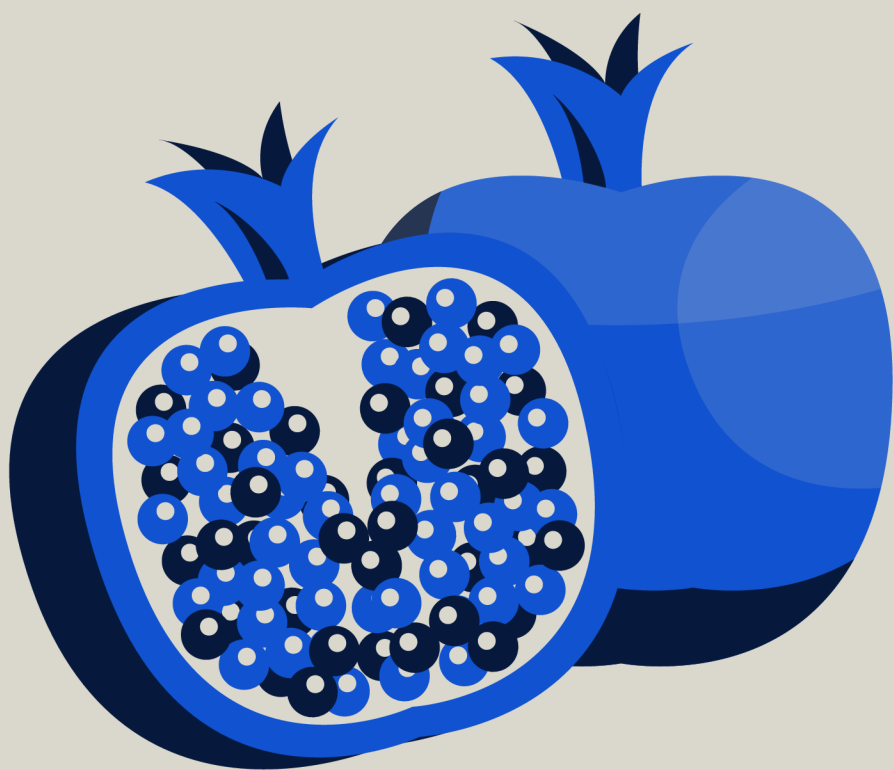
Ask a few friends to join you and let's get together in your homes once a month or periodically. You provide the group and together we'll select the topics. We can draw from this year's BEIT themes or from topics of your own interest.

Perhaps you've got high school students at home, and you'd like to gather with a few of their friends and families? Maybe you've got younger children at home, and you'd enjoy learning a bit and celebrating Jewish occasions together?

I hope you'll consider reaching out. Let's figure out what and when according to your interests and grow together with family and friends exploring our Jewish heritage and tradition.

Sincerely,  
Rabbi Ron Shulman





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Beth El