

Living Judaism 5782 (2021-2022)

Syllabus

I am a Jew because... by Edmond Fleg

I am a Jew because

Judaism demands no abdication of the mind.

I am a Jew because

Judaism asks every possible sacrifice of my life.

I am a Jew because

Wherever there are tears and suffering the Jew weeps.

I am a Jew because

Whenever the cry of despair is heard the Jew hopes.

I am a Jew because

The message of Judaism is the oldest and the newest.

I am a Jew because

The promise of Judaism is a universal promise.

I am a Jew because

For the Jew, the world is not finished; human beings will complete it.

I am a Jew because

For the Jew, humanity is not finished; we are still creating humanity.

I am a Jew because

Judaism places human dignity above all things, even Judaism itself.

I am a Jew because

Judaism places human dignity within the oneness of God.

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B'ruchim haba'im! Welcome to a year of Living Judaism. As a community and as individuals we are setting out on a journey of discovery that will involve two of the greatest characteristics of Judaism, joy and wrestling. During this journey we will: explore the depth and richness of the Jewish way of life; open our minds, hearts, bodies, and spirits to the traditions that have been passed down; and honor that tradition with our hard questions and creative responses to it. Please let me know if you must miss a class.

Expectations:

Texts (page numbers may not match depending on the edition – use the section names if your edition does not match the page numbers listed. All e-book versions will NOT match):

- *Emet v'Emunah: Statement of Principles of Conservative Judaism (EE)* (copy given in class)
- Michael Strassfeld, *A Book of Life (BL)*
- Joseph Telushkin, *Jewish Literacy (JL)*
- Michael Strassfeld, *The Jewish Holidays: A Guide and Commentary (JH)*
- United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism website: <http://www.uscj.org>
- Optional Readings: Martin S. Cohen, Editor, *The Observant Life (OL)* (not required for class)

Actions:

- Visit at least two synagogues.
- Visit at least one other Jewish agency: Jewish Family Services, JCC (*Jewish Community Center*), a Jewish day school, the Kline-Galland or Summit home, the mikveh. You will be asked to attend a specific event at one of these agencies.
- Wear a kippah and tzitzit (*a tallit katan – undergarment with fringes on the corners*) for a week and reflect on your experiences.
- Select a book from the bibliography, read it, and present a 5-10 minute report on it to the class. If there is a particular book you would like to read and report on that is not on the list, please let me know.
- Keep a journal about your experience of practicing Judaism. (See the beginner's checklist.)
- Attend a Kabbalat Shabbat and a Havdalah service at Congregation Beth Shalom. (See below.)
- During the year we will schedule opportunities for experiential learning and community building, such as a Kabbalat Shabbat experience followed by a Shabbat dinner, a Havdalah experience followed by a discussion, a film and discussion on the Holocaust, a challah-baking class, hamantaschen baking, and more.

Year Schedule: (There are High Holiday prep classes for both Living Judaism and the congregation at large. Living Judaism Classes start formally 10/19 Unless otherwise noted, Living Judaism classes meet in the Beit Midrash at Congregation Beth Shalom or on Zoom. Instructor available for questions and conversation after each class; class session from 8:05 to 9:15pm. Other synagogue classes locations TBA. Items not shaded are class events.

Date	Day	Class or Event
8/24	Tue	Rosh Hashanah: Start Your Year Right <i>READ:</i> JL sections 293 & 294, pages 622 – 625 “New Year/Rosh Hashanah” and “Tashlikh” BL Pages 260 – 273 “High Holidays: Rosh Ha-shanah and Yom Kippur” Optional Reading: OL 146 – 156 “The Jewish New Year” thru “Tashlikh”
8/28	Sat	Leil Selichot: Prayers for forgiveness in preparation for the High Holidays Optional Reading: OL 145 “S’lihot”

Date	Day	Class or Event
8/31	Tue	Yom Kippur: The Day and Forgiveness in Judaism <i>READ:</i> JL section 296, pages 626 – 629 “Yom Kippur” Optional Reading: OL 157 – 169 “The Day of Atonement” thru “Ne’ilah”
9/14	Tue	Sukkot: Living on the Journey <i>READ:</i> JL Sections 297,298, 299, pages 629-634 “Sukkot”, “Shemini Atzeret” “Simchat Torah” <i>BL:</i> Pages 274-283 “Sukkot” Optional Reading: OL 169 – 187 “The Festival of Sukkot” thru “Simhat Torah”
9/6	Mon	Erev Rosh Hashana
9/7	Tue	Rosh Hashanah 5781: The Jewish New Year
9/8	Wed	Rosh Hashana II
9/9	Thu	Tzom Gedaliah: Fast of Gedaliah, commemorates the assassination of the last Jewish governor of Judah.
9/15	Wed	Erev Yom Kippur (Kol Nidre)
9/16	Thu	Yom Kippur: Day of Atonement
9/20	Mon	Erev Sukkot
9/21 – 27	Tue – Mon	Sukkot: Feast of Tabernacles or booths. First two days are Yom Tov (holiday with work restriction).
9/27	Mon	Sukkot VII (Hoshana Raba)
9/28	Tue	Shmini Atzeret: Eighth Day of Assembly
9/29	Wed	Simchat Torah: Day of Celebrating the Torah
10/9	Sat	Learners’ Minyan – Overview & P’sukei D’Zimra
10/19	Tue	The Jewish Calendar <i>READ:</i> BL Pages 229 – 230 “The Jewish Calendar” JL: Section 292 “Listing of the Jewish Holidays in Context of Solar/Lunar Year” Optional Reading: OL Pages 138 – 139 “The Jewish Calendar”
10/26	Tue	What is Judaism? Who is a Jew? Unity and Diversity in Judaism <i>READ:</i> EE 45-46 “The Ideal Conservative Jew” <i>PRACTICE:</i> Morning blessings: Who has made me in Your image, Who has made me Yisrael, Who has made me free.
11/2	Tue	The Synagogue: Origin, Architecture, Gestures, Objects, Prayer <i>READ:</i> JL Sections 333 – 347, pages 705-735 “Temple/Synagogue”, “Minyan”, “Mekhitza”, “Rabbinic Ordination”, “Common Terms”, “Siddur et al.”, “Torah Scroll”, “Torah Portion”, “Aliyah”, “Priestly Blessing”, “Tzitzit”, “Tefillin”, “Kippah”, “Some Famous Prayers” Optional Reading: OL 61 - 80 “Synagogue Life” <i>PRACTICE:</i> Aliyah blessings

Date	Day	Class or Event
11/9	Tue	Navigating the Jewish Community, Local to National to Global; Israel, from People to State; Conversion <i>READ:</i> BL 467-74 "Israel: Toward a Torah of Zion" JL 650 "Israeli Independence" EE 27-36 whole section on "The Jewish People" Optional Reading: OL 339 - 359 "Israel"; OL 255 - 260 "Conversion"
11/13	Sat	Learners' Minyan – Tallit & Tzitzit
11/16	Tue	Hanukkah and Purim (and other minor festivals: Rosh Chodesh, Tu B'Shevat) <i>READ:</i> BL 284-297 "Hanukkah", "Tu Bishvat", and "Purim" JL Sections 64-66, 300-302, pages 111-16, 634-35, 637-38 "Antiochus", "Maccabees", "Hannah", "Hanukka", "Tu B'Shvat", and "Purim" JH 161-198 "Hanukkah: Increasing the Light" Optional Reading: OL 187 - 201 "Hanukkah" thru "Purim" <i>PRACTICE:</i> Hanukkah blessings
11/23	Tue	No Class – Thanksgiving Break
11/25	Thu	Thanksgiving
11/28	Sun	Chanukah: The Jewish festival of rededication, also known as the Festival of Lights.
11/30	Tue	Jewish Home: Mikdash Ma'at <i>READ:</i> BL, 3-21, 94-102 "Dawning" and "The End of the Day" JL Section 297, pages 588-591 "Hospitality" EE 39-40 "The Jewish Home" <i>PRACTICE:</i> Morning Blessings
12/7	Tue	Shabbat: First Among Festivals <i>READ:</i> BL 103-34 "Shabbat: A Day for Walking Softly Through the World" For further reading: Abraham Joshua Heschel, The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man; Noam Sachs Zion and Shawn Fields-Meyer, A Day Apart Optional Reading: OL 98 - 136 "Shabbat" <i>PRACTICE:</i> Shabbat blessings Book Review
12/11	Sat	Learners' Minyan - Shema
12/14	Tue	Asara B'Tevet: 10th of Tevet, Fast commemorating the siege of Jerusalem.
12/14	Tue	Guest Lecturer
12/21	Tue	No Class – Winter Break
12/28	Tue	No Class – Winter Break
1/1	Sat	New Year's Day
1/4	Tue	Introduction to the Three Paths of Torah, Avodah, and G'milut Hasidim <i>READ:</i> BL 206-23 "Gemilut Hesed: The Path of Loving-Kindness" EE 36-39 ("Social Justice; On Women") Optional Reading: OL 81 - 97 "Torah Study" <i>PRACTICE:</i> Aliyah blessings

Date	Day	Class or Event
1/11	Tue	Jewish Prayer <i>READ:</i> BL 176-205 “Avodah: The Path of Prayer” JL 731-36 “Some Famous Prayers, Sh’ma Yisrael” Introduction to the Sim Shalom siddur EE 40-43 (“Tefillah: Prayer”) Optional Reading: OL 5 - 19 “Prayer” Book Review
1/15	Sat	Learners’ Minyan – Amidah for Shacharit & Musaf
1/15-16	Sat-Sun	Limmud Seattle (www.limmudseattle.org)
1/17	Mon	Tu BiShvat: New Year for Trees.
1/18	Tue	Jewish Life Cycle: Childhood and Teenage Years <i>READ:</i> BL 304-23 & 337-352 “Genesis/Bereishit: Beginnings and Birth” & “Genesis/Bereishit: Parents and Children” and “Exodus/Shemot: Bar and Bat Mitzvah” Optional Reading: OL 239 - 254 “The Jewish Life Cycle” Book Review
1/25	Tue	Jewish Life Cycle: Conversion, Marriage and Divorce <i>READ:</i> BL 324-36 , 357-95; 403-21 “Genesis/Bereshit: Conversion”, “Leviticus/Va-Yikra: Relationships & Sexuality”, “Leviticus/Va-Yikra: Marriage”, and “Numbers/Be-midbar: Living in the Desert” starting with the section marked “Divorce” until “Hakhnasat Orhim” Optional Reading: OL 255 - 279 “The Jewish Life Cycle”
2/1	Tue	Jewish Life Cycle: Illness: Visiting the Sick, Hospitality <i>READ:</i> BL 396-403, 415-422 “Numbers/Be-midbar: Living in the Desert” (but not into the section marked “Divorce”) and picking up with “Hakhnasat Orhim” through the rest of the chapter. Optional Reading: OL 279 - 282 “The Jewish Life Cycle” Book Review
2/8	Tue	Jewish Life Cycle: Mourning, Afterlife <i>READ:</i> BL 440-66 “Deuteronomy/Devarim: Death” EE, 24-27 “Eschatology: Our Vision of the Future” For further reading: Ron Wolfson, <i>A Time to Mourn, A Time to Comfort</i> ; Jack Riemer, <i>Jewish Reflections on Death</i> ; Leon Wieseltier, <i>Kaddish</i> Optional Reading: OL 282 - 304 “The Jewish Life Cycle” Book Review
2/15	Tue	God, Humankind, and the Spiritual Practice of Blessing <i>READ:</i> JL Section 348, pages 736-38 “Blessing/B’racha” EE 17-19 “God” Optional Reading: OL 51 - 56 “Prayer” “Blessings” <i>PRACTICE:</i> Various blessings Book Review
2/19	Sat	Learners’ Minyan – Kedushah of Shacharit & Musaf

Date	Day	Class or Event
2/22	Tue	<p>Kashrut: Dietary Laws and Practices <i>READ:</i> BL 66-93 "Eating and Food" JL Section 332, pages 699-702 "Kosher/Kashrut" For further reading: Rachel Barenblat, "Rethinking Kashrut: An Interview with Rabbi Morris Allen" (http://www.zeek.net/711kashrut/); Samuel H. Dresner and Seymour Siegel, <i>Jewish Dietary Laws and Practices</i>; Elizabeth Ehrlich, <i>Miriam's Kitchen</i>; Shimon Apisdorf, <i>Kosher for the Clueless but Curious</i> Optional Reading: OL 305 - 338 "The Dietary Laws" Book Review</p>
3/1	Tue	<p>Mitzvot and Middot as a Life of "Normal Mysticism" <i>READ:</i> JL Section 255, pages 545-47 "Commandment/Mitzvah" BL 22-65 "Speech" and "Work" Read one of the entries in the JL Jewish Ethics section (pp. 548-595) that is meaningful to your life and be prepared to speak to it in class EE 19-23 "Halakah" Optional Reading: OL 582 - 589 "Gossip, Slander, and Talebearing" Book Review</p>
3/8	Tue	<p>Jewish History Standing on One Foot <i>READ:</i> JL 115-254 (browse any of the sections in Parts 2, 3, and 4 according to your interest) For further reading: Raymond P. Scheindlin, <i>A Short History of the Jewish People</i>; Eli Barnavi and Miriam Eliav-Feldon, <i>Historical Atlas of the Jewish People: From the Time of the Patriarchs to the Present</i>; Haim H. Ben-Sasson (Editor), <i>A History of the Jewish People</i> Book Review</p>
3/9	Sat	<p>Learners' Minyan – Torah Service</p>
3/15	Tue	<p>No Class (Pre-Purim)</p>
3/16	Wed	<p>Ta'anit Esther: Fast of Esther Followed by Erev Purim</p>
3/17	Thu	<p>Purim: Purim is one of the most joyous and fun holidays on the Jewish calendar Purim</p>
3/18	Fri	<p>Shushan Purim: Purim celebrated in Jerusalem and walled cities</p>
3/22	Tue	<p>Passover Torah Study <i>READ:</i> Exodus, Chapters 6-15; BL pages 231-243 "Pesah/Passover" JH 5-45 "Pesah: Feasting for Freedom" Optional Reading: OL 202 - 220 "The Passover Festival" Book Review</p>
3/29	Tue	<p>Passover Haggadah <i>PRACTICE:</i> Pesach blessings and songs Book Review</p>

Date	Day	Class or Event
4/2	Sat	Learners' Minyan - Ashrei
4/5	Tue	Omer and Shavuot <i>READ:</i> BL: 244-255 "The Omer" and "Shavuot" JL: Section 311, pages 653-655, "Counting the Omer and Shavuot" Optional Reading: OL 220 - 228 "Counting the Omer" thru "Shavuot"
4/12	Tue	No Class (Pre-Pesach)
4/15	Fri	Ta'anit Bechorot: Fast of the First Born.
4/16 – 23		Pesach: Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread. First two days and last two days are Yom Tov.
4/19	Tue	No Class (Pesach)
4/26	Tue	Introduction to Jewish Texts I <i>READ:</i> BL 139-175 "Torah" JL 149-62, 206-11, 528-39, 643-44 "Oral Law", "Babylonian Talmud", "Halakha", "Kabbalah", "Code of Jewish Law", "Guide to Perplexed", "Response Literature", "Mishneh", "Torah", "Zohar", and "Haggada" EE 43-45 "Talmud Torah" For further reading: <i>Back to the Sources</i> (ed. Barry W. Holtz) <i>PRACTICE:</i> Blessing for studying Torah Book Review
4/28	Thu	Yom HaShoah: Holocaust Memorial Day.
5/3	Tue	Introduction to Jewish Texts II
5/4	Wed	Yom HaZikaron: Israeli Memorial Day.
5/5	Thu	Yom HaAtzma'ut: Israeli Independence Day.
5/10	Tue	Snow Day Make Up or Open Forum
5/14	Sat	Learners' Minyan – Ein Keloheinu and Aleinu
5/17	Tue	Living Judaism SIYUM , 7:00 - 8:30 pm
5/19	Thu	Lag B'Omer: 33rd day of counting the Omer
5/29	Sun	Yom Yerushalayim: Jerusalem Day
6/4	Sat	Erev Shavuot
6/5	Sun	Shavuot: Festival of Weeks, commemorates the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai
6/6	Mon	Shavuot II
6/11	Sat	Learners' Minyan – Kaddish and Adon Olam
7/17	Sun	Tzom Tammuz: Fast of Tammuz commemorating breaching of the walls of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar on the 17 th of Tammuz.
8/6	Sat	Erev Tish'a B'Av
8/7	Sun	Tish'a B'Av: The Ninth of Av, fast commemorating the destruction of the two Temples
8/12	Fri	Tu B'Av Jewish holiday of love, similar to Valentine's Day

The following class experiences will be scheduled throughout the year:

- Kabbalat Shabbat services at shul followed by Shabbat dinner
- Weekday morning minyan
- Hanukkah
- Havdalah
- Baking, taking, and blessing challah
- Making hamantaschen and mishloach minot for Purim
- Kashering for everyday and Pesach

Bibliography:

Nonfiction

- Eli Barnavi and Miriam Eliav-Feldon, *Historical Atlas of the Jewish People: From the Time of the Patriarchs to the Present*
- Rachel Adler, *Engendering Judaism: An Inclusive Theology and Ethics* (out of print)
- Martin Buber, *The Way of Man or I and Thou*
- Harvey Cox, *Common Prayers: Faith, Family and a Christian's Journey through the Jewish Year*
- David J. Wolpe, *Healer of Shattered Hearts* (focus on relationship to God in contemporary life)
- Blu Greenberg, *How to Run a Traditional Jewish Household*
- Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man*
- Isaac Klein, *A Guide to Jewish Religious Practice*
- Harold Kushner, *To Life*
- Marcia Prager, *The Path of Blessing: Experiencing the Energy and Abundance of the Divine*
- Rabbi Joseph Bar Soloveitchik, *The Lonely Man of Faith or Halakhic Man*
- Herman Wouk, *This Is My God*
- Mark Zborowski and Elizabeth Herzog, *Life is With People: The Culture of the Shtetl*

Novels and memoirs

- Aharon Appelfeld, *The Conversion*
- Lawrence Kushner, *Kabbalah, A Love Story*
- Chaim Potok, *Davita's Harp, The Chosen, or The Gift of Asher Lev*
- Jonathon Rosen, *Joy Comes in the Morning*
- Milton Steinberg, *As a Driven Leaf*
- Elizabeth Ehrlich, *Miriam's Kitchen* (memoir)

Conversion

- Conversion to Judaism Resource Center: <http://www.convert.org/>
- Catherine Hall Myrowitz, *Finding a Home for the Soul: Interviews with Converts to Judaism* (Jason Aronson Inc., 1995).
- Maurice Lamm, *On Becoming a Jew* (Jonathon David Publishers)

Cookbooks

One of the most delightful ways to learn and live Judaism is by becoming familiar with a great Jewish cookbook, such as:

- Rabbi Robert Steinberg's *The Sephardic Kitchen*
- Claudia Roden's, *The Book of Jewish Food*
- Joan Nathan's *Jewish Cooking in America* (history of recipes and how cooking changed after Jews came to America).

A Beginner's Checklist of Jewish Practice:

Below is a list of basic Jewish practice (*mitzvot*, commandments, and *minhagim*, customs) with which you will become familiar with over the coming year. These practices form the basis of an observant Jew's life in the home, the synagogue, and the work place. Please remember that this is a minimal list and does not comprise the whole fabric of Jewish life.

Please keep track of the times when you experience these rituals and occasions in a journal, noting your impressions, insights, and questions.

I. Common Halachic Practices

By the end of the year participants should be familiar with and know how to practice the following:

- Aliyah to the Torah
- Wearing tallit and tefillin
- Shabbat observance, including Shabbat table rituals
- Knowledge of Shabbat rules and prohibitions
- Shabbat-ending Havdalah service: *Attend at least one havdalah service at CBS or with a mentor*
- Chanting the Birkat Hamazon (grace after meals)
- Kashering and basic kashrut practice
- Use of the mikveh

II. Shabbat and the weekdays

We ask participants to attend the Shabbat services at the synagogue. Shabbat is the core of synagogue life. Regular attendance will help you to learn the centrality of Shabbat in Jewish life. Involvement in a morning minyan will also expose you to the prayer traditions of Jews practiced around the world.

III. Festivals and Fast Days Services

The services listed below have been chosen by the Rabbi for their importance and distinctiveness. They will involve freeing up these days or services from work obligations. This is one of the first and more important aspects of taking Jewish religious life seriously.

An observant Conservative Jew does more than what is listed below, specifically observing (not working and setting aside these days for feasting and celebration) two days of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, the first day of Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret, first and seventh days of Passover and the first day of Shavuot. (We also have congregants who observe the second festival days of Sukkot, Simchat Torah, Passover, and Shavuot).

Participants are encouraged to incorporate Sabbath and Festival observance into their lives. Your instructor will discuss the outlines of such observance over the course of the year. Please make sure you have a Jewish calendar so you can know when the holidays fall this year.

	Service	Date
1	First Day Rosh Hashanah Morning Services	Sep. 7
2	Kol Nidre Services/Yom Kippur	Sep. 15
3	Yom Kippur Morning Services	Sep. 16
4	Neilah Closing Services for Yom Kippur	Sep. 16
5	First Day Sukkot Services	Sep. 21
6	Evening Simchat Torah Services	Sep. 28
7	First night of Chanukkah (at home)	Nov. 28
8	Shabbat of Chanukkah	Dec. 4
9	Reading of Megillat Esther on Purim	Mar. 16 & 17
10	First Day Passover Services	Apr. 16
11	Lail Tikun: All Night Shavuot Study Session	Jun. 4
12	Evening Tisha b'Av Services	Aug. 6

IV. Home Rituals of the festivals

Below is a list of home rituals connected to the festivals that you should experience during the year. These are events that you would typically experience with your congregational mentors.

- A ritual meal in the sukkah
- The ritual lighting of the Hanukkah menorah
- Bedikat Hametz ritual on the eve of Passover
- The Passover seder
- A Yom Tov festival meal besides Sukkot and the Passover Seder

V. Life Cycle

Below is a list of life-cycle rituals that we hope you will experience during your year of studies:

- A ritual circumcision ceremony for a boy and a covenanting ceremony for a girl, either done in the synagogue or a home
- A Jewish wedding ceremony (chuppah)
- A Jewish funeral and going to a shiva house for a shiva minyan
- A Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony on a Shabbat morning