

**DRAFT AS OF 7/5/18**  
**MINNEAPOLIS CONSERVATIVE SYNAGOGUES**  
**Introduction to Judaism**  
5779 / 2018-2019

<p><b>Rabbi Alexander Davis</b>  Beth El Synagogue  5225 Barry Street West  St. Louis Park, MN 55416  952.873.7300  <a href="mailto:adavis@bethelsynagogue.org">adavis@bethelsynagogue.org</a>  <a href="https://www.besyn.org/">https://www.besyn.org/</a></p> <p>Oct 9 – Dec 18, 2018</p>	<p><b>Rabbi Avram Etedgui</b>  Sharei Chesed Congregation  1712 Hopkins Road  Minnetonka, MN 55305-2029  763.545.8800  <a href="mailto:avrame@aol.com">avrame@aol.com</a>  <a href="http://www.shareichesed.org/">http://www.shareichesed.org/</a></p> <p>Jan 8, – Feb 5, 2019</p>	<p><b>Rabbi Harold Kravitz</b>  Adath Jeshurun Congregation  10500 Hillside Lane  Minnetonka, MN 55305  952.545.2424  <a href="mailto:rabbikravitz@adath.net">rabbikravitz@adath.net</a>  <a href="http://www.adathjeshurun.org/">http://www.adathjeshurun.org/</a></p> <p>Feb 12 – May 14, 2019</p>
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The class will be held on Tuesday evenings, from Oct 9, 2018, through May 14, 2019, and will meet from 7:30 to 9:00 pm. The class also includes a *Shabbat* dinner and a tour and explanation of the *mikvah*. Each of the above rabbis will teach part of the course, and class sessions will be held at each teaching rabbi's synagogue during his portion.

As the year progresses, we will offer a course in Hebrew Reading, which will be taught by Rachel Levitt. **It will meet on Tuesdays from 6:30 to 7:30 pm, beginning Nov \_\_, 2018. The fee for the Hebrew course is \$125 per individual or \$160 per couple; make checks payable to Adath Jeshurun Congregation.** (Please contact your sponsoring rabbi if there is any concern about the cost of the course.) The class will teach phonetic Hebrew reading and home-based prayer skills (e.g., *b'rakhot* [blessings] for foods, *Shabbat* home rituals, reciting the *Sh'ma*, etc.), plus some frequently used modern Hebrew terms.

Every class participant must have a sponsoring rabbi who will meet with him/her initially. In addition to the class, participants who are interested in conversion to Judaism will meet with their sponsoring rabbi during the course of the year. The number of meetings and the final requirements for conversion will be determined by each sponsoring rabbi.

The success of this class depends upon honest communication, an exploration of Judaism shared by students and teachers. It is crucial that each member of the class feels free to express himself/herself frankly and honestly. At times, people's questions and comments may be addressed in class. At other times, it will be more appropriate to discuss individual concerns in private meetings with one's sponsoring rabbi. It is our hope that people will keep their sponsoring rabbi informed of their progress and will discuss with him any decisions regarding conversion or marriage.

**Class Requirements:**

- Regular attendance until the conclusion of the class in May 2018; Jewish partners of those considering conversion, are expected to attend as well.
- Completion of reading assignments for each class.
- Contribution of \$50 per individual or \$75 per couple for administrative costs. (This can be waived upon consultation with the sponsoring rabbi.) **Checks should be made out to the "Beit Din Masorti of Minnesota."** There is a separate charge for the Hebrew Reading class (see above).
- Men are asked, and women are welcome, to wear a *kippah* in class.

**Recommended Experiences Outside of Class:**

- Series of Jewish experiences (e.g., Passover *seder*, *Shabbat* dinners, *Chanukah* candles and rituals, visiting a *sukkah*, hearing the *M'gillah* on *Purim*, etc.).
- Development of a pattern of personal and communal Jewish observance and pursuit of a Jewish spiritual life.
- Regular attendance at synagogue services throughout the Twin Cities.
- Experience *Shabbat* and Holidays at synagogues (Let us know if you would like to be hosted or tickets for High Holidays services, if needed)
- Keep a journal of your Jewish experiences and feelings this year.
- Create a glossary of Jewish terms.

**Requirements for Those Who Choose to Convert to Judaism:**

- Accept the basic beliefs and principles of Judaism.
- *Kabbalat 'ol ha-mitzvot* (acceptance of the yoke of the commandments): demonstrate an integration of Jewish knowledge and practice (including, but not limited to, observance of *Shabbat* and *kashrut*)
- Be able to read Hebrew in original text.
- Integrate into a synagogue of your liking and the general Jewish community.
- Renounce previous religious commitment and set boundaries regarding non-Jewish religious celebrations.

**Final Ritual Steps for Conversion to Judaism:**

- Meet with *beit din* (rabbinical court) convened by sponsoring rabbi.
- *T'vilah* (ritual immersion) in a *mikvah*.
- *B'rit milah* (ritual circumcision) or *hatafaat dam b'rit* (drawing a drop of blood) for men.

**Readings for Introduction to Judaism:**

- Bradley Artson, *It's a Mitzvah: Step-by-Step to Jewish Living*
- Elliott Dorff, *Conservative Judaism: Our Ancestors to Our Descendants*
- Samuel H. Dresner, *Keeping Kosher: A Diet for the Soul*
- Neil Gillman, *The Way into Encountering God in Judaism*
- Lawrence Hoffman, *The Way into Jewish Prayer*
- Martin Cohen, *The Observant Life*
- Michael Strassfeld, *A Book of Life*
- Joseph Telushkin, *Jewish Literacy*
- Ron Wolfson, *A Time to Mourn, A Time to Comfort*
- Raymond P. Scheindlin, *A Short History of the Jewish People*
- Milton Steinberg, *Basic Judaism*
- Elie Spitz, *Does the Soul Survive?*

**Requirements for Those Taking Introduction to Hebrew:**

- Paul Michael Yedwab, *Learn Hebrew today: Alef-Bet for Adults*

**Recommended Prayer Books, Torah Texts:**

- *Siddur Sim Shalom* or *Siddur Lev Shalem* (Conservative prayer books)
- Reuven Hammer, *Entering Jewish Prayer*
- Reuven Hammer, *Ohr Hadash: A Commentary on Siddur Sim Shalom*
- JPS, *The Jewish Study Bible*
- *Etz Hayim* (The Torah with a Conservative commentary)
- *Mahzor Lev Shalom* (Conservative High Holy Days prayer book)
- Rabbinical Assembly, *Passover Haggadah: The Feast of Freedom*

**Other Recommended Books:**

- Anita Diamant, *The New Jewish Wedding Book*
- Arnie Eisen, *Conservative Judaism Today and Tomorrow*
- Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man*
- Larry Hoffman, *My People Prayer Book*
- Harold Kushner, *To Life and When Bad Things Happen to Good People*
- Joseph Telushkin, *Jewish Wisdom*
- Joseph Telushkin, *Jewish Values*

Most of these books are available from Elijah's Cup in St. Louis Park, in synagogue libraries, some local libraries and online.

**Elijah's Cup**

4212 Minnetonka Boulevard, St. Louis Park, MN 55416

Phone 952.926.4433 E-mail: [toots140@juno.com](mailto:toots140@juno.com)

**Recommended Websites**

- An excellent website for more information about Judaism is <http://www.myjewishlearning.com/>
- The website of the Conservative movement's synagogue organization United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism <http://www.uscj.org/>
- The Rabbinical Assembly- the international organization of Conservative rabbis <http://www.rabbinicalassembly.org/>
- The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, the intellectual center of the Conservative movement <http://www.jtsa.edu>

## Class Sessions (Tuesday evening 7:30-9pm)

### Classes at Beth El with Rabbi Davis

All Rabbis	Oct.9, 2018	Introductory Session: Personal Introduction, Course Description & Expectations.
Rabbi Davis	Oct. 16	Introduction to Synagogue
Rabbi Davis	Oct. 23	Shabbat 1 Reading: Strassfeld, <i>A Book of Life</i> , p. 103-138 * Introduction to Hebrew begins???
Rabbi Davis	Oct. 30	Shabbat 2 Reading: Cohen, <i>The Observant Life</i> , p. 98-102, 122-136
Rabbi Davis	Nov. 6	<i>T'filah</i> - The Art of Jewish Prayer 1 Reading: Hoffman, <i>The Way into Jewish Prayer</i> , Ch. 1, Ch. 2, p. 58-67, Ch. 5, p.135-151
Rabbi Davis	Nov. 13	<i>Tefilah</i> - The Art of Jewish Prayer 2 Reading: Telushkin, <i>Jewish Literacy</i> , part 15
Rabbi Davis	Nov. 20	<i>Kashrut</i> 1 Reading: Artson, <i>It's a Mitzvah</i> , p. 84-95 Strassfeld, <i>A Book of Life</i> p. 66-93
Rabbi Davis	Nov. 27	<i>Kashrut</i> 2
Rabbi Davis	Dec. 4	<i>Chanukkah; Chanukkah Party; the December Dilemma</i> Reading: Strassfeld, <i>A Book of Life</i> , p. 284

### Classes at Sharei Chesed with Rabbi Etedgui

Rabbi Davis	Dec. 11	Tanakh [Bible] Reading: Telushkin, <i>Jewish Literacy</i> , p. 3-6, selections of Part I
Rabbi Davis	Dec. 18	Rabbinic Literature: Midrash, Mishnah, Talmud Reading: Telushkin, <i>Jewish Literacy</i> , p. 114-161, 536-549
	Dec. 19- Jan. 1	December Break
Rabbi Etedgui	Jan. 8	Judaism in the Middle Ages Reading: <i>Jewish Literacy</i> , Selections of Parts 3-4
Rabbi Etedgui	Jan. 15	Life Cycle 1 – Birth & Beyond Reading: Strassfeld, <i>A Book of Life</i> , p. 304-323
Rabbi Etedgui	Jan. 22	Life Cycle 2 – Bar & Bat Mitzvah Reading: Salkin, <i>Putting God on the Guest List</i> (to be distributed)
Rabbi Etedgui	Jan. 29	Life Cycle 3 - Marriage & Divorce Reading: Strassfeld, <i>A Book of Life</i> p. 373-395
Rabbi Etedgui	Feb. 5	Life Cycle 4 (End-of-Life Issues) Reading: Ron Wolfson, <i>A Time to Mourn, A Time to Comfort</i> (to be distributed)

## Classes at Adath Jeshurun Congregation with Rabbi Kravitz

Rabbi Kravitz	Feb. 12	Theology 1: Finding God- Sh'ma Reading: Milton Steinberg, <i>Basic Judaism</i> pp. 42-46 (required) Gillman, <i>The Way Into Encountering God</i> , p. 1-16; p. 51-70 optional
Rabbi Kravitz	Feb. 19	Theology 2: The Problem of Suffering Reading: Steinberg, <i>Basic Judaism</i> p. 53-58 (required) (Holocaust theology handout)
Rabbi Kravitz	Feb. 26	Theology 3: Afterlife Reading: Elie Spitz, <i>Does the Soul Survive?</i> Chap 6 p. 49-55
Rabbi Kravitz	March 5	Theology 4: Conservative Judaism Reading: Dorff, <i>Conservative Judaism</i> , p. 9-26, 30-36, 96-100 required Gillman, <i>WIEG</i> , p. 145-163; p. 127-144 (recommended)
Rabbi Kravitz	March 12	Judaism, Christianity, Islam Reading: to be distributed
Rabbi Kravitz	March 19	Topics in Jewish Law Women reading to be distributed LGBTQ reading to be distributed Purim
		Purim Celebrated Eve of March 20-21
Rabbi Kravitz (substitute)	March 26	Holocaust, Reading: Scheindlin, <i>A Short History</i> , p.199-215 (to be distributed)
Rabbi Kravitz (substitute)	April 2	Israel Reading: Scheindlin, <i>A Short History</i> , p. 216-233 ** Introduction to Hebrew concludes ??
Rabbi Kravitz	April 9	Pesach Reading: Cohen, <i>The Observant Life</i> , p. 202-220; Strassfeld, <i>A Book of Life</i> p. 231-252
Rabbi Kravitz	April 16	The Enlightenment / American Jewry Reading: Scheindlin, <i>A Short History</i> , p. 236-263 Kling & Perkins, <i>Embracing Judaism</i> , p. 173-182

Rabbi Kravitz	April 19- April 27	Pesach observed  Confirm with sponsoring rabbi that you have a seder to attend. 1st seder evening of Friday, April 19. 2nd seder, evening of Saturday, April 20.
Rabbi Kravitz	April 23	High Holy Days and Sukkot Reading: Strassfeld, <i>A Book of Life</i> , p. 260-283
Rabbi Kravitz	April 30	Shavu'ot Reading: Cohen, <i>The Observant Life</i> , p. 224-228; Strassfeld, <i>A Book of Life</i> p. 253-255 The Book of Ruth
Rabbi Kravitz	May 7	Minor Holidays Reading: Strassfeld, <i>A Book of Life</i> , p. 229, 256, 290
Rabbi Kravitz	<b>Thursday May 2 7: 00 pm</b>	Yom HaShoah Community Commemoration (Please plan to stay after the service until about 8:45 to debrief)
Rabbi Kravitz	May 14 6-7pm (Confirm)	6-7pm St Paul Mikvah Tour 1955 Montreal, St Paul, MN, 55116 What is involved in Conversion? Strassfeld, <i>A Book of Life</i> , p.324-336, Perkins and Kling <i>Embracing Judaism</i> p.10-22, <i>Emet V'Emunah</i> p. 56-57
	June 8- 10	Shavuot Observed Eve of June 8- June 10 Attend Tikkun Leyl Shavuot