



Overcoming Antisemitism in America, Upcoming Programs, Shul Tours and More – May 20, 2024

SPRING SPEAKER SERIES - JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN AMERICA

Join us online for a three-part series featuring three leading scholars discussing three very different aspects of the Jewish experience in America. This series is dedicated in memory of our friend, Chelsea native, Boston area educator and author Norman H. Finkelstein, z"l.

Walnut Street Synagogue

SPRING SPEAKER SERIES - JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN AMERICA

Overcoming Antisemitism in America
with Rabbi Charles Savenor

Program partners: CIVIC SPIRIT ORANGE COUNTY COMMUNITY SCHOLAR PROGRAM

Overcoming Antisemitism in America
Wednesday, May 22, 7:00 pm EDT (online)

While the alarming increase in Antisemitism in the United States is cause for concern, Norman Finkelstein shows us that this is just the latest iteration of prejudice and hatred on these shores. This session will explore his final book, *Saying No to Hate: Overcoming Antisemitism in America*, to understand as much the current crisis as the Jewish community's unending courage, perseverance, and hope. We will also have a chance to remember Norman Finkelstein, a natural storyteller with Chelsea roots. Our speaker, **Rabbi Charles E. Savenor**, is the Executive Director of Civic Spirit. Before joining the Civic Spirit team, Rabbi Savenor worked at Park Avenue Synagogue in New York as the Director of Congregational Education. He graduated from Brandeis University with a B.A., summa cum laude, and received rabbinic ordination from the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) with a concentration in Education. In addition to his Masters of Education from Columbia University Teachers College, he was awarded an honorary doctorate by JTS in 2022. He blogs on parenting, leadership, civic education, and Judaism in the 21st century. He is currently writing a book called *What My Father Couldn't Tell Me*. Originally from Needham, MA, he lives in New York City with his wife and two sons, who are all Red Sox fans. *This series is made possible by a grant from the Congregation Ahabat Shalom Religious Fund and other generous donors.*

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/spring-speaker-series-overcoming-antisemitism-in-america-tickets-846118211347?aff=oddtcreator>

CSP

We are pleased to be a partner congregation of the Orange County Jewish **Community Scholar Program (CSP)**. Please join us at an upcoming program!



Intersections of Art, Conflict, and Memory: George Segal's 'The Sacrifice of Isaac'

Tuesday, May 21, 1:00 pm EDT (online)

It's been 51 years since American pop artist George Segal's sculpture *Sacrifice of Isaac* was first installed outside Tel Aviv's Mann Auditorium. The modernist artist, raised in New York by his Eastern European immigrant parents, chose the story of the sacrifice of Isaac as an homage to his father and his own affinity with the biblical story. The sculpture was first exhibited in May 1973 at the outdoor plaza of Tel Aviv's Mann auditorium. Five months following the sculpture's installation, the Yom Kippur War broke out, and the events of those weeks of war charged the sculpture with a new range of political and social meanings. For the casting of the characters, Segal invited Israeli sculptor Menashe Kadishman and his son to model Abraham and Isaac. The collaboration between the American artist and a prominent Israeli artist regarding a politically charged subject resulted in a significant work on an international scale. Years later, Kadishman ended up creating his own take on the "Sacrifice of Isaac" story, with a connection to his own son's beginning his service in the Israeli army (his sculpture is on permanent display outside the Tel Aviv Art Museum in Hostages Square). In our session with Sophia, we will examine art works by Segal, focusing on this remarkable sculpture, and explore its relevance today. Since 2016, **Sophia Berry** has been working as an Assistant Curator at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art (TAMA). Her position at TAMA includes responsibilities of managing exhibitions from the museum's collections and external loans, researching the museum's collections, overseeing outgoing loans, writing catalogue texts, and leading restoration projects. Sophia's latest project was a special exhibition of George Segal's (1914–2000) sculpture, *Sacrifice of Isaac*, that was uncovered after a two-year restoration process. Sophia has also curated a special display dedicated to Joseph Israel's *From Darkness and Light* (1871), which was recently discovered to have been Jewish property before the War. Since her return from a two-year sabbatical in Denver, Sophia has been working in the photography department.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0pd-CvrT4pHdL0K3cbHP10zwHMQiDoJh7I#/registration>

Sovereignty, Violence and Morality – Zionism and the Ethics of Judaism

Part 3 – Thursday, May 23, 3:30 pm EDT (online)

Part 4 – Thursday, May 30, 3:30 pm EDT (online)

The current Israeli-Palestinian conflict has seen a revival of the discussion regarding the Jewish right to establish a state in the Land of Israel that has occasioned a renewed focus on the dynamics of sovereignty. Beyond a doubt, the implementation of Jewish sovereignty in Eretz Yisrael is the essential dimension of political Zionism. In this four-part seminar, Rabbi Seidler-Feller will examine the manner with which religion interacts with sovereignty and with the nationalist impulse that it nurtures. Among the questions considered are: Can the mingling of religion and state function constructively or must their interplay always be toxic, resulting in harmful and oppressive outcomes? Can God and religious values curb the excesses of nationalist fervor? How does the seductively alluring nature of power factor into the Zionist expression of Jewish sovereignty? And can there be a Zionism that embraces God, but does not aspire to sovereignty? We will study a variety of sources, ranging from the writings of the Rabbi of Satmar (an avowed anti-Zionist), to the power centered ideology of Vladimir Jabotinsky, to the messianic exhortations of the Rabbis Kook (father and son) and the settler rabbis of Gush Emunim (the Bloc of the Faithful), to the pacifist thought of "One of the Passionate Rabbis" and to the humanistic teachings of Ahad Ha'am and the founders of religious Zionism. We will see how some of these teachings inform and shape Israeli politics and foment the extremism that is evident today. And we will discover the sober

voices of the tradition that promote constraint and a limitation on the unfettered exercise of power.

Rabbi Chaim Seidler-Feller recently celebrated his fortieth year of working with students and faculty as the Executive Director of the Yitzhak Rabin Hillel Center for Jewish Life at University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). He is currently Director Emeritus. He was ordained in 1971 at Yeshiva University where he completed a Masters in Rabbinic Literature. Chaim has been a lecturer in the Departments of Sociology and Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at UCLA and in the Department of Theological Studies at Loyola Marymount University. He is currently a faculty member of the Shalom Hartman Institute, North America and of the Wexner Heritage Foundation. He was the founding director of the Hartman Fellowship for Campus Professionals and a founding member of Americans for Peace Now. In 2014 he initiated a fact-finding mission for non-Jewish student leaders to Israel and the Palestinian Authority which is now offered on 90 campuses. He is married to Dr. Doreen Seidler-Feller, a clinical psychologist, and is the father of Shulie, a photojournalist and Shaul, an ordained rabbi who is currently serving as a Judaica consultant at Sotheby's while pursuing a doctorate in Jewish History at the Hebrew University.

https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZckf-2srzkiEtdro5xCQfyL5ym4lwWILLA?utm_source=CSP&utm_campaign=68abf96719-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_04_03_04_55_COPY_03&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_5ee28fcb1-68abf96719-386548940#/registration

Jewish Heritage Across the Balkans: A Journey Through History and Culture

Part 2 – Trieste - Sunday, June 9, 1:00 pm EDT (online)

Part 3 – Slovenia and Serbia - Sunday, July 14, 1:00 pm EDT (online)

Part 4 – Bulgaria - Sunday, August 11, 1:00 pm EDT (online)

Immerse yourself in the captivating history and rich culture of Balkan Jewry with our exclusive series, “Jewish Heritage Across the Balkans: A Journey Through History and Culture.” Starting on May 12th, join us for a virtual exploration through Croatia, Trieste, Slovenia, Serbia, and Bulgaria. Discover the enduring legacy of Jewish communities, from ancient synagogues to modern-day resilience. Witness the unique blend of Sephardic and Ashkenazi traditions, and learn about their significant contributions throughout history.

Part 2 – Trieste - Journey through the enigmatic city of Trieste, a melting pot of cultures at the Slovenian-Italian border. Delve into the rich Jewish history dating back to the 14th century and visit the magnificent Synagogue and the former Jewish Quarter.

Part 3 – Slovenia and Serbia - Travel through time in the former Yugoslav territories, discovering the blend of Sephardic and Ashkenazi traditions. Learn about Jewish life from ancient times to the present day, including the heroic stories of Jewish Partisans during WWII.

Part 4 – Bulgaria - We conclude our Balkan journey in Bulgaria, where the majestic Sofia Synagogue and the historic town of Samokov await. Experience the architectural splendor and deep history of the Jewish community from its earliest days to the 21st century.

Evgenia Kempinski, our guide, is a Russian Jew born and raised in St. Petersburg. Her family was originally from the Pale of Settlement – Poland, Ukraine and Belorussia – and endured the suppression of Judaism in the Soviet Union then the rebirth of Jewish culture and religious life in today's St. Petersburg. She has been an official St. Petersburg tour guide for over 15 years and is the founder and owner of St. Petersburg Jewish Tours – a company offering Jewish travelers a unique experience of showcasing the best of Russia from a Jewish point of view. She currently lives in Haifa, Israel, still keeping close connections with St. Petersburg and its Jewish community.

https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZlufu6hgD0uH9wMLvu-oRJvc-SkG7ernZkB?utm_source=CSP&utm_campaign=6a79f54d1d-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_04_03_04_55_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_5ee28fcb1-6a79f54d1d-386548940#/registration

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Explore the Heart of Judaism – Spirit, Ethics and Community

Part 1 – Finding Torah in Our World: How the Torah Developed - Thursday, May 23, 7:30 pm EDT

Part 2 – What is Jewish Community: The People Israel - Thursday, May 30, 7:30 pm EDT

Part 3 – What Do Jews Believe: Wrestling with God - Thursday, June 6, 7:30 pm EDT

Part 4 – Where Do We Go from Here: Next Steps Q & A - Thursday, June 20, 7:30 pm EDT
(online series presented by the Lappin Foundation)

Join the Lappin Foundation for an online series with Rabbi Jessica Lowenthal from Temple Beth Shalom in Melrose and Rabbi Alison Adler from Temple B'nai Abraham in Beverly. This series is provided at no cost thanks to generous support from the Morton and Lillian Waldfogel Charitable Foundation and Peter and Maureen Waldfogel.

<https://www.lappinfoundation.org/2023/08/01/a-preview-of-introduction-to-judaism/>

SHUL TOURS

If you live in the Boston area and have never seen our historic shul, or haven't visited in a while, or if you plan to visit the area, we welcome you to see our shul in person and take a tour! Please follow the link below for more information and to request **Individual/Family** or **Group (new)** tours.

Visitor Information - <https://walnutstreetsynagogue.com/visit/>

YAD CHESSED



Yad Chessed helps Jewish individuals and families who struggle with financial hardship pay their bills and buy food. As a social services agency rooted in the Jewish values of kindness (chessed) and charity (tzedakah), they are committed to helping those in need navigate a path toward financial stability while preserving their privacy and dignity. They provide emergency financial assistance, grocery gift cards and compassionate advice for those trying to make ends meet. Hundreds of families and individuals throughout the state rely on Yad Chessed to provide for their essentials, and even at times, a Jewish burial for a loved one. Members of our community, as well as others in the Jewish community, who need assistance may contact Yad Chessed by phone at 781-487-2693 or by Email at intake@yadchessed.org for a confidential conversation. Questions can be directed to info@yadchessed.org.

Support Yad Chessed - <https://givebutter.com/yadchessed>

OUR COMMUNITY NEWS

Do you have milestones such as marriages, births, Bar and Bat Mitzvahs, special birthdays, graduations, etc. to share with our community? If so, please submit details to central.walnutstreetshul@gmail.com to be included in our weekly announcements. Photos are welcome!

GIVING

Please visit our Giving page to send tributes, recognize yahrzeits and make other general donations to support the Walnut Street Synagogue. Donations can be made online or through the mail.

<https://walnutstreetsynagogue.com/giving/>

VISIT US ONLINE

Website

<https://walnutstreetsynagogue.com/>

Facebook Page - Walnut Street Synagogue

<https://www.facebook.com/WalnutStreetSynagogue>

Facebook Group - Jews of Chelsea, MA Then and Now

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ChelseaJews>

The Walnut Street Synagogue is the center for Jewish history, education and culture serving Chelsea, Greater Boston and beyond and is the historic home of Congregation Agudas Sholom. (added to National Register of Historic Places in 1993)



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