



Institute for Jewish Spirituality
Clergy Leadership Program

Spirituality is a view of religion that sees its primary task as cultivating and nourishing the human soul or spirit. Each person, according to this view, has an inner life that he or she may choose to develop; this ‘inwardness’ goes deeper than the usual object of psychological investigation and cannot fairly be explained in Freudian or other psychological terms. Ultimately, it is ‘transpersonal,’ reaching beyond the individual and linking him/her to all other selves and to the single Spirit or Self of the universe we call God. God is experientially accessible through the cultivation of this inner life.”

—Arthur Green, *Restoring the Aleph: Judaism for the Contemporary Seeker*

The role of Jewish spiritual leaders is becoming more complex while the needs of the community, and the world at large, are becoming more urgent. Rabbis and cantors serve best when grounded in their own spiritual practice and when rooted in an awareness of fundamental interconnection and interdependence. Dedicated spiritual practice develops such awareness, as well as qualities of heart and mind to sustain compassion and do justice. Through their own development, religious leaders catalyze transformation more broadly—both interpersonally and institutionally. Such mindful leaders, enriched by Jewish spiritual and mystical tradition, more skillfully engage the inner life as a key force for personal and global transformation. Through their own practice, they access an inner well of calm and clarity, confidence, strength and gratitude that nourishes and sustains them in responsive, wise, and compassionate service.

The Clergy Leadership Program invites you—cantors and rabbis—to join the more than 450 other Jewish professionals who have studied with the Institute. The Program offers 40 rabbis and cantors an immersive,

practice-based approach to deepen their own spiritual lives and the spiritual life of the Jewish community, bringing the full vitality of body, heart, mind and soul to the highly intellectualized, privatized and fragmented Judaism of today. Participants refine the teaching and guidance they provide for Jews seeking spiritual growth and insight. Grounded in contemplative practice, they serve more mindfully as leaders, more skillfully revitalizing Jewish living.

The participation of cantors and rabbis in this program is itself recognition of the significance of interdependence and interconnection in spiritual life. Each holds a key essential to unlocking the heart. Rabbis—in the main—are teachers who relish sharing our tradition through the study of texts and verbal communication. Cantors—in the main—are teachers who delight in the power of music and song to awaken spiritual awareness. Each is important; neither is sufficient in itself. In studying and practicing the expression of both voice and word we may all deepen our capacity for mutual compassion, understanding and creative cooperation.

“What struck me most was not only the quality of the work being done but the depth of the impact IJS is making in the world of Reform, Conservative and Reconstructionist rabbis and cantors and, by extension, their congregations. . . . In their own quiet way, they are creating a sea change in Jewish religious practice . . . it is rigorous and intellectually engaging, it has religious integrity, and above all, in my view, it is honest. . . . They are helping rabbis make religious meaning and deep spiritual experience accessible to all Jews who seek it, regardless of background.”
—Rabbi Shirley Idelson

Join Us!

The Institute for Jewish Spirituality continues a spirit of Neo-Hasidism which began to grow in Europe at the turn of the twentieth century, and which now has substantial roots in America. In our study we explore, renew and apply the riches of Jewish spiritual traditions, especially emphasizing the teachings of mysticism, Hasidism and niggunim, and meditation. Out of this study of traditional sources and practices—with attention to how they act upon us—we hope to encourage a new creativity in language and in practice that is at the same time rooted in the tradition. We passionately believe that when Jewish leaders study this stream of Jewish texts and practices with an eye toward cultivating awareness through mindfulness practice, not only will they develop personally, but, through their teaching, will also transform the texture of American Jewish religious life.

Program

The Institute for Jewish Spirituality’s Clergy Leadership Program is a retreat-based program of study and practice. Participants live and learn together for four retreats lasting five days each over the course of eighteen months. Retreats combine prayer, meditation, text study, yoga, group discussion, singing as spiritual practice, and one-on-one guidance with faculty members. The period between retreats is an essential part of the program. Participants continue to learn and grow through sustained practice of mindfulness meditation or yoga, a guided program of weekly hevruta study, and regular contact with faculty.

One of the most direct paths to non-judgmental self-knowledge, compassion and social responsibility is through contemplative practice while on retreat. From the end of the evening activities through the next day’s lunch, participants hold themselves and each other in a community of silent reflection. This contemplative attitude prevails even while engaging in the day’s activities including voiced prayer, mindfulness meditation, yoga, singing and text study.

“Purify our hearts to serve you in truth.”

—The Siddur

Cultivating Dimensions of the Soul

The program is designed to help participants grow in consciousness and character. Ideas about the nature of the self and God are explored analytically through study and discussion as well as experientially through meditation, prayer, song and spiritual direction. Our text study focuses primarily on the hasidic tradition as a source of inspiration. Prayer and meditation are informed by both classical rabbinic and hasidic traditions. The program helps participants develop a deep sense of authenticity and equanimity, grounded in compassion for the self and other, leading to more flexible, responsive, and skilled organizational leadership.

Developing as Spiritual Leaders

In addition to its emphasis on the cultivation of participants’ personal awareness, insight, knowledge and skills, the program aims to help participants refine their abilities to teach and lead others who seek similar growth and development. As both cantors and rabbis are leaders of prayer, a key focus of the program will be on deepening prayer as a personal spiritual practice. Doing so will provide the foundation for our further investigation of the discipline of leading meaningful prayer for and with others.our further investigation of the discipline of leading prayer for and with others.

Once participants complete the eighteen-month program, they become part of the Institute’s Hevraya community of alumni,

which offers ongoing opportunities to sustain their spiritual practice, supporting them to best enable the spiritual growth of the Jews we serve.

Growing in Community

One of the most important ingredients in sustaining spiritual growth is the support of community. The Institute for Jewish Spirituality creates a community of individuals who support each other's growth and practice in an atmosphere of honesty and depth. Over the eighteen-month course of study, during the retreats and between them, each participant enjoys the support of a hevruta companion, periodic phone calls with faculty members, and the group as a whole.

“The inadequacy of the means at our disposal appears so tangible, so tragic, that one feels it a grace to be able to give oneself up to music, to a tone, to a song, to a chant. The wave of a song carries the soul to heights which utterable meanings can never reach.”—Abraham

Joshua Heschel

Faculty

The Institute for Jewish Spirituality is led by an outstanding faculty, each of whom is deeply committed to reinvigorating American Jewish religious life. Faculty members include Rabbis Myriam Klotz and Jonathan Slater, and Cantors Richard Cohn and Elizabeth Shammash. They are teachers and practitioners of hasidic, kabbalistic and modern Jewish texts, music, Jewish meditation, spiritual direction, yoga and psycho-spiritual growth.

Dates, Location, Cost

Winter retreats will take place at the Brandeis Bardin campus of the American Jewish University in Simi Valley, CA. Summer retreats will be held at Pearlstone Retreat Center in Reisterstown, MD. Food will be kosher.

Retreats will begin on Sunday evening and conclude on Friday morning (with an option to leave on Thursday night).

**“We work to amplify and extend our consciousness so that our spiritual perception is not a fleeting spark but a sustained awareness.”
—Kalonimus Kalman Shapira (1889–1943), the Rebbe of Warsaw**

Retreat Dates

January 12-17, 2020	July 12-17, 2020
January 10-15, 2021	July 11-16, 2021

Tuition for the program is offered at three levels:
Level 1: \$4300 Level 2: \$3800 Level 3: \$3400

Participants commit to a single tuition level for the full extent of the program. Tuition will be split into four equal payments: first payment upon commitment to the program, and subsequent payments with the last three retreat registrations.

In addition to tuition, fees for room and board at each retreat are:

Double Room: \$900 Single Room: \$1125

Applications

This program has an application fee of \$120.

Prior to attending the first retreat, all participants are required to complete the IJS 8-week course, The Gift of Awareness, which provides instruction in the fundamentals of Jewish mindfulness meditation. Access to the course will be granted upon payment of the application fee, regardless of whether or not one is accepted into the program.

For more information about the program, please write or call: Rabbi Jonathan Slater, Senior Program Director
Institute for Jewish Spirituality
121 W. 27th Street, Suite 404
New York, NY 10001
jonathan@jewishspirituality.org
212-913-9198

Applications are available online at
ijs.regfox.com/clp4-apply

All applications must be received by June 30, 2019.