



The Marbeh Fellowship

Cultivating Senior Jewish Mindfulness Teachers

The Marbeh Fellowship - Cohort Directory

Shira Abramowitz she/her

Shira's work primarily explores the neurological, psychological, and philosophical underpinnings of how we learn, together. As faculty at Or HaLev, Shira teaches mindfulness and meditation and stewards the local NYC community. Formerly the director of programming at Summit Series and founder of its nonprofit arm, Summit Impact, Shira spent years experimenting with how groups co-create positive social change. She completed the Harvard Mind, Brain, and Education master's program, as well as teacher training programs with IJS and Or HaLev. As co-founder at Up & Up Creative, Shira designs events and programs that increase our capacity for complexity, compassion, honesty, and action.

Benjamin Barnett he/him

Benjamin Barnett, ordained at RRC in 2006, is rabbi of Havurah Shalom in Portland, Oregon. He is an alum of the rabbinic cohort of IJS as well as the Kol Zimra chant leader's training, and has practiced and learned with many teachers in the both the Jewish and Buddhist worlds. He is engaged with multi-faith partnerships and networks working to build a more just and caring world, and strives always to listen deeply and co-create communities of belonging.

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Rabbi Lauren Berkun she/her

Rabbi Lauren Berkun is Dean of the Shalom Hartman Institute's ordination program, Rabbanut North America. She has served multiple professional roles over the past twenty years at Hartman, including Vice President of Rabbinic Initiatives. She was ordained at the Jewish Theological Seminary and graduated with a BA in Religion from Princeton University. She was a Wexner Graduate Fellow, a CLAL Rabbinic Fellow, and a Senior Hartman Rabbinic Fellow. Lauren is a certified Sivananda yoga instructor with certification in mindfulness practices from Mindfulness Practices, LLC. She lives in Aventura, Florida, with her husband, Rabbi Jonathan Berkun of the Aventura Turnberry Jewish Center, and their three children.

Aviva Chernick she/her

Aviva Chernick is an artist, spiritual leader, and community builder dedicated to fostering creative and courageous Jewish engagement. She is the Director of the Centre for Spiritual Wellbeing and a member of the Spiritual Leadership team at Beth Tzedec Congregation in Toronto. Certified in Jewish Mindfulness Meditation through IJS, Aviva founded neySHEV, a pioneering Jewish Mindfulness Meditation community in Canada. She is also a founding member of Na'aleh - Toronto Jewish Mindfulness Collective. Beyond her spiritual leadership, Aviva is a twice Juno-nominated and Canadian Folk Music Award-winning musician. Aviva delights in dancing Gaga and caring for her Chihuahua, Luz Libi.

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Alison Cohen she/her

Alison Cohen, aka Ali, supports people in connecting with themselves, others, and ancient and contemporary wisdom traditions. A former public high school teacher and mindfulness program director, Ali guides Two Wings Mindfulness and has trained with the Jewish Mindfulness Center of Brooklyn, OrHaLev / IJS, Mindful Schools, UMass Center for Mindfulness, the International Institute for Restorative Practices, and beloved teachers. She mentors in Tara Brach and Jack Kornfield's programs and teaches in Tara's 2026 Choosing to Love course. Alongside her mindfulness work, Ali conducts DEI curriculum reviews for educational nonprofits serving American public schools. She loves dancing to soca, discussing the role of the sacred across traditions in helping us make our way through the messiness of life, and reveling in Shabbat.

Rabbi Josh Feigelson he/him

Josh was appointed Executive Director of IJS in January 2020 and became President & CEO in April 2022. He received ordination from Yeshivat Chovevei Torah Rabbinical School in 2005, and served for six years as the Hillel Rabbi at Northwestern University, where he also earned a PhD in Religious Studies. In 2011, Josh helped found and served as Executive Director of Ask Big Questions, an initiative of Hillel International, which won the inaugural Lippman-Kanfer Prize for Applied Jewish Wisdom. Prior to joining IJS he served as Dean of Students at the University of Chicago Divinity School. He is the author of *Eternal Questions: Reflections, Conversations, and Jewish Mindfulness Practices for the Weekly Torah Portion* (Ben Yehuda Press, 2022). Josh lives with his wife Natalie and their three sons in Skokie, IL.

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Rabbi Sam Feinsmith he/him

Rabbi Sam Feinsmith has been immersed in Jewish contemplative living, learning, and teaching for over twenty years, conducting Jewish meditation workshops, programs, and retreats for children, teens, Jewish educators, clergy, and community leaders. He's passionate about practicing and teaching meditation and making the spiritual teachings of Hasidism available to all. He received an MA in Talmud and Rabbinics from the Jewish Theological Seminary, and rabbinic ordination from YCT Rabbinical School. He also trained as a Jewish mindfulness meditation teacher with the Institute for Jewish Spirituality Jewish Mindfulness Meditation Teacher Training Program. Sam lives on the land of the Council of the Three Fires – the Potawatami, Ojibwe, and Odawa tribes – currently known as Evanston, IL with his wife Sarah-Bess and daughter Elanit.

Sarah Hurwitz she/her

Sarah Hurwitz is the author of two books on Jewish tradition and identity – Here All Along and As a Jew, which is a New York Times bestseller and winner of the Natan Book Award and a National Jewish Book Award. From 2009 to 2017 she was a White House speechwriter, serving as a senior speechwriter for President Barack Obama and head speechwriter for First Lady Michelle Obama. She is a graduate of IJS's JMMTT mindfulness teacher training program, has completed training as a hospital chaplain, and is enrolled in the Shalom Hartman Institute's rabbinic program.

Kohenet Keshira haLev Fife she/they

Kohenet Keshira haLev Fife (she/they) sprinkles sparkles, disrupts expectations, and offers blessings wherever she goes. She serves as Founding Kohenet of Keshet Pittsburgh and is a Core Faculty Member with the Institute for Jewish Spirituality; she also enjoys working with Jewish Studio Project and Kirva among other national Jewish organisations. Additionally, she delights in serving as a facilitator, teacher, life spiral ceremony/ritual creatrix, shlichat tzibbur, liturgist and songstress. Her work in these realms is informed by her lived experience as a queer, bi-racial, child-free Jewish person living with chronic illness, her belief that Book, Body and Earth are equal sources of wisdom, the quandaries she has encountered as a scholar of the Orphan Wisdom School, and her deep commitment to a thriving, liberatory Jewish future. Keshira received Kohenet smicha in 2017 and earned her BS (2000) and MS (2001) at Carnegie Mellon University. Though both the lands of the Osage & Haudenosaunee people (aka Pittsburgh, PA) and the Gadigal people (Sydney, AUS) feel like home, Keshira and her beloved have been in an extended period of travel since January 2023.

Jes Golden, PhD they/she

Jes H. Golden (formerly Jes Heppler) is a meditation teacher and scholar-practitioner. As a meditation teacher, Jes weaves Jewish and earth-based spirituality with philosophical and neuroscientific insights. Jes teaches regularly for IJS: they host the LGBTQ+ Monthly Sit and regularly lead online and in-person programming for the IJS young adult community, Shevet. Jes earned a Ph.D. in Philosophy from UC Berkeley and is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Center for Possible Minds at Indiana University, Bloomington and an Affiliated Scientist with the Meditation Research Program at Harvard Medical School/Massachusetts General Hospital. Currently, Jes is researching bodily awareness in advanced meditation states as well as the phenomenology of neo-Hasidic Jewish contemplative practices.

David Gottlieb he/him

David was lay ordained as a Zen Buddhist before turning to Jewish contemplative practice, which he has studied with Rabbi Jordan Bendat-Appel and Rabbi Sam Feinsmith. David earned his PhD in the History of Judaism from the University of Chicago Divinity School in 2018. He is co-author, with Akiva Tatz, of "Letters to a Buddhist Jew", and author of "Second Slayings: The Binding of Isaac and the Formation of Jewish Memory. David is an adjunct member of the faculty in Jewish Studies at Spertus Institute in Chicago.

Rabbi Ariel Hendelman she/her

Rabbi Ariel Hendelman was recently ordained through the ALEPH Ordination Program and is the Spiritual Leader of B'nai Or Boston. Ariel believes deeply in chant and meditation as practices that elevate and transform our lives, and leads circles both online and in-person for organizations such as Or HaLev. Ariel loves teaching Torah at the intersection of mythology, mysticism, and mindfulness. Info on her year-long midrash class, *Buried Treasure: Torah As Sacred Mythology*, can be found [here](#). Ariel's written words appear in *Ayin Press*, *DoubleBlind Magazine*, and most recently, on her Substack. Her debut album, *Prayers for Fire & Water*, is a blend of folk and niggunim and can be heard wherever you get your music. Her new EP will be released this winter. Ariel's newest live music project is called *In The Tavern: A Mystical Musical Confluence* and is being offered in collaboration with Sufi musician, Umer Piracha.

A former LGBTQ+ community builder in Jerusalem, Ariel moved back to the States five years ago, and now calls MA home.

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Rabbi Zvika Krieger he/him

Rabbi Zvika Krieger is the Spiritual Leader of Chochmat HaLev, a progressive spiritual community in Berkeley, CA. He is co-founder of Shevet: Jewish Mindfulness Collective, co-creator and lead instructor for ThirdHouse: Sacred Leadership Lab, and co-leader of radical Shabbat services for thousands of dusty seekers at Burning Man. Zvika has previously served as Facebook/Meta's first-ever Director of Responsible Innovation, co-founder of the World Economic Forum's Center for the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the US State Department State's first-ever "Ambassador to Silicon Valley," and Middle East Correspondent for Newsweek. He is the author of the forthcoming book "The God You Don't Believe In: Ancient Wisdom for Modern Living, Loving, and Letting Go" (Penguin Random House, 2027). Learn more about Zvika at www.zvikakrieger.com and follow him on Instagram at [@zkrieger](https://www.instagram.com/zkrieger).

Rabbi Miriam Margles she/her

Miriam has a long and rich association with IJS, having taught on various retreats and programs over the years. She joins the Institute as a Senior Core Faculty after over a decade as the rabbi of the Danforth Jewish Circle in Toronto. Her career has included service as a founding faculty member at the Romemu Yeshiva, serving as a fellow with the Rising Song Institute, co-founding Encounter – the award-winning educational program working toward informed, courageous and resilient Jewish leadership on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and recording her original Jewish music with the Hadar Rising Song ensemble. Miriam's album, Zeh HaYom – this is the day, is available at: <https://miriammargles.bandcamp.com/>

Miriam teaches and leads by creating an atmosphere of attentive, brave, playful and open-hearted exploration of Jewish text, prayer and spiritual practices, our inner landscapes, resilient connection with others, and relationship with the wider world, all working toward healing, wisdom and liberation. Her work integrates exploration through movement, voice and song and creative writing. She is a graduate of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, an alumna of the Wexner Graduate Fellowship and the Jerusalem Fellows at the Mandel Leadership Institute. She earned an MTS from Harvard Divinity School and a BFA from York University.

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Rabbi Batsheva Meiri she/her

Batsheva Meiri was ordained at HUC-JIR New York in 1996. She has served as a pulpit rabbi since in New York, Maryland, and North Carolina. After completing a multi-year fellowship at the Shalom Hartman Institute in 2009, she found a beautiful complement to her continued rabbinic training by participation in multiple IJS programs, including interning with JMTT4. Since then she has integrated contemplative practice into all parts of her rabbinate has co-taught retreats all over the country and Mexico and looks forward to deepening and broadening her skills in Marbeh. She is married to Mark and has two children Noa and Gabriel.

Cantor Julie Newman she/her

Julie Newman is the founder and President of Tiferet Project, a Pittsburgh-based nonprofit offering contemplative practices grounded in Jewish wisdom. She has led Jewish mindfulness meditation sessions twice weekly since 2019 and designs retreats integrating meditation, yoga, and Jewish text study. Julie completed the Jewish Mindfulness Meditation Teacher Training through IJS in 2018, is an active Hevraya member, and sustains her own practice through regular retreat attendance. She holds cantorial ordination and a Master of Jewish Education from Hebrew College and an MBA from Carnegie Mellon University.

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Rabbi Dev Noily they/them

Dev Noily serves as Senior Rabbi at Kehilla Community Synagogue in Oakland, California, Lisjan Ohlone territory of Huchiun, and is a graduate of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. Dev trained with teachers Sheila Weinberg, Jordan Bendat Appel and Jeff Roth in the Institute for Jewish Spirituality's Jewish Mindfulness Meditation Teacher Training program. They've taught at the East Bay Meditation Center, and teach Jewish meditation retreats with Or HaLev. Dev is the co-founder of Jews on Ohlone Land, building place-based Jewish diaspora in solidarity with Indigenous communities in Huchiun.

Shuli Passow she/her

Rabbi Benjamin Ross he/him

Rabbi Benjamin Ross is an experience designer and leadership innovator who loves building things that continue to thrive long after his direct leadership. As Founder and Executive Director of The Amen Center for Civic and Spiritual Leadership, he supports communities and congregations to cultivate capable, values-driven leaders and purpose-powered teams. His path weaves community organizing, congregational life, seminary teaching, and entrepreneurial mischief. Off the clock, he's happiest traveling with his family—spiritually grounded in the holy comfort of a perfect bowl of dumplings.

Rebecca Schisler she/her

Rebecca is a meditation teacher, artist, and Jewish educator. A devoted contemplative practitioner, she has led groups and taught classes and retreats with Or HaLev, Wilderness Torah, Pardes, Stanford School of Medicine, Urban Adamah, Hamakom, and the Awakened Heart Project. She was previously the Director of Student Health & Well-being at Stanford University's Hillel, and co-authored the Mahloket Matters Schools Curriculum with the Pardes Center for Jewish Educators. A student rabbi at ALEPH, Rebecca is passionate about integrating ancestral wisdom traditions with innovative approaches to personal and collective healing and liberation. She teaches Jewish spirituality as an embodied, holistic, and accessible path, with relevant and timely wisdom for all. Rebecca currently lives in the California Bay Area, where she maintains a lively studio art practice as the artist-in-residence at the JCC East Bay, loves to host Jewish gatherings of all kinds, and tries to lose herself among her neighboring redwood trees as much as possible. Learn more at www.rebeccaschisler.com.

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Larry Schwartz he/him

I am delighted to be in Marbeh. I grew up in a Conservadox household and went to an Orthodox day school. I loved them both but didn't feel truly at home in either. I was involved in the Somerville Havurah in the 70s. I have been meditating for 25 years in a Jewish and secular Buddhist context. I have taught mindfulness for teachers and students in Jewish day schools and NYC public schools and at the Rommemu community. I have been involved with IJS for 25 years. I have been looking to be in a group of serious Jewish mindfulness practitioners for a long time.

Yael Shy she/her

Yael Shy is the Founder and CEO of Sefira Wellness, where she teaches and consults on mindfulness for universities, corporations, and other institutions around the world. She is the author of the award-winning book, *What Now? Meditation for Your Twenties and Beyond* (Parallax, 2017), and the founder of Mindful NYU. Yael is a graduate of the IJS Jewish Mindfulness Teacher Training Certification (cohort I) and has been practicing in the Jewish Mindfulness and Soto Zen traditions for over twenty years. She teaches at New York University, Columbia Law, IJS and Or HaLev and lives in Stamford, Connecticut, with her husband Ben and her two sons, Zusha and Moses. You can find her online at www.sefirawellness.com and on instagram @yaelshy1

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Rabbi Lauren Tuchman she/her

Rabbi Lauren Tuchman is a sought-after speaker, spiritual leader, and educator ordained by the Jewish Theological Seminary in 2018. Based in the Washington, D.C. area, she teaches, consults, and leads workshops across North America on disability access and inclusion, bringing a deep commitment to radical inclusivity and the belief that anyone can take hold of Torah and contribute their unique insights. An alum of the SVARA Kollel and the Institute for Jewish Spirituality's Clergy Leadership Program, Rabbi Tuchman is a teacher in multiple Jewish mindfulness and meditation communities and is completing advanced training in Jewish contemplative practice. In 2024, she launched Disability Wisdom As Soul Care in partnership with Kirva, and she writes the Contemplative Torah Substack.

Carrie Watkins she/her

Carrie Watkins is a practitioner, organizer, and teacher of Jewish Meditation. A fifth year Rabbinical Student at Hebrew College, Carrie has been teaching meditation and mindfulness for startups, on silent retreats, for teenagers on backcountry trips, from her living room, and from other peoples' living rooms, for the last 8 years. A systems thinker with a Master in City Planning from MIT, Carrie is attentive to the ways meditation and mindfulness can bring healing both our own internal systems and to the communal, societal, and ecological systems of which we're a part. Carrie has a certificate in Integrative Somatic Trauma Therapy and is just finishing up the three year Gates of Awareness: Jewish Meditation Teacher Training program.

The Marbeh Fellowship Directors

Rabbi Jordan Bendat-Appell he/him

Rabbi Jordan Bendat-Appell, has been a practitioner of mindfulness meditation for nearly 30 years, and brings a wealth of experience in Jewish education and contemplative practice to his work. In his role as Senior Core Faculty at the Institute for Jewish Spirituality (IJS), Jordan focuses on teaching Jewish mindfulness and text, planning and directing retreats, and leading the development of a new training program for advanced teachers of Jewish mindfulness. His previous leadership roles include serving as Director of Camp Ramah in Canada from 2019-2022 and as the founding Director of Ramah Beyond. Earlier in his career for IJS, Jordan was a teacher of Jewish Mindfulness and Director of the Jewish Mindfulness Meditation Teacher Training, and he also taught meditation to clergy through IJS' Clergy Leadership Program. After his ordination in 2008, Jordan served as a congregational rabbi and co-founded the Center for Jewish Mindfulness in Chicago, which became part of Orot. A recipient of the 2014 Covenant Foundation Pomegranate Prize, Jordan lives in Toronto with his wife Yael and three kids. Outside of work, you can find Jordan in his kayak exploring new waterways or in a hot yoga studio.

Rabba Dorothy Richman she/her

Rabba Dorothy Richman serves as Rabbi of Makor Or: Jewish Meditation Center and Rabbi Emerita of Congregation Beth Sholom in San Francisco. She teaches on the faculty of the Institute for Jewish Spirituality's Clergy Leadership Program and for Or HaLev. Dorothy's committed to the spiritual practices of Torah study, meditation, prayer, and justice. She is a soulful leader of traditional and creative ritual, and released an album of original music called Something of Mine, available on Bandcamp.