



## 18 Conversations



You're curious about Judaism and what this 3,000 year-old, constantly evolving tradition has to offer your life?

### Welcome,

In this course I will plan to share with you some of the highlights, core concepts, master stories, key figures and building blocks of what Judaism means to me, what it has meant to so many generations before us, and why I find it a compelling path towards a life of meaning, mindfulness, creativity and connection.

Each of the 18 concepts I have chosen to outline in this course offer a glimpse into Judaism's emphasis on Wisdom, Soul, and Together: a life of learning, spiritual practice and communal responsibility. This is an everybody-friendly course, open to all seekers regardless of background or beliefs. Curiosity, respect for others, open mind and heart are mostly all that's needed. Each session will be a conversation, encouraging multiple perspectives, inquiries and questions.

**I look forward to meeting you and going on a meaningful journey together.**

**-Rabbi Amichai Lau-Lavie**



*Rabbi Amichai Lau-Lavie is the founding spiritual leader of Lab/Shul NYC and the founding director of StorahTelling, Inc. An Israeli-born Jewish educator, writer, and performance artist, he received his rabbinical ordination from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in 2016. Rabbi Amichai has been hailed as "an iconoclastic mystic" by Time Out New York, a "rock star" by the New York Times. He was a Jerusalem Fellow at the Mandel Leadership Institute in Israel (2008-2009), served on the advisory committee of Faith House Manhattan, is a consultant to the Reboot Network, and a member of the URJ Faculty Team.*



**WHERE: On Zoom**

**WHEN: Mondays, 6:30pm-8:30pm**

## **UNIT I "WISDOM"**

**1. Nov 9, 2020 - 22 Chesvan 5781**

### **GO/LECH-L'CHA**

#### **You Are Here to Talk the Walk**

Begin this journey with an introduction to the art of Jewish storytelling and a close reading of our oldest origin story about going on, going in, and letting go.

**2. Nov 16, 2020 - 29 Chesvan 5781**

### **CALENDAR/MOED**

#### **Mapping the Jewish Year**

Overview of the Jewish calendar and its historical evolution from agricultural system to interpersonal tool for private and collective meaning making. Figure out the fasts, feasts and the reason for each season.

**3. Nov 23, 2020 - 7 Kislev 5781**

### **SACRED STORY/TORAH**

#### **Written + Spoken Body of Knowledge**

On the mountain, in public squares, on one foot, in our heads and hearts: What is Torah? What are its origins and how did it evolve into the central sacred Jewish story?

**4. Nov 30, 2020 - 14 Kislev 5781**

### **LAW & LEGEND/HALACHA & AGADA**

#### **The Legal Fictions of Jewish Life**

Laws and legends, hand in hand, inform the Jewish body of behaviors and beliefs. Find out how both traditions evolve and what's the best approach to fusion and integration.

**5. Dec 7, 2020 - 21 Kislev 5781**

### **ORCHARD/PARDES**

#### **Entering the Orchard to Undress Reality**

Entering the Pardes, Hebrew for "orchard," is a poetic term that describes the process of deep learning. Pardes is also an acronym, describing a four-step methodology with which to make sense and meaning of life.

**6. Dec 14, 2020 - 28 Kislev 5781**

## **QUEEN/SHECHINA**

### **Who is She Who Dwells Within?**

Jewish theology has developed over centuries and continues to reflect our changing social values and reality. How do our mythical assumptions of the divine continue to mirror and mould who we are in the 21st Century threshold of non-binary post-patriarchy?

## **UNIT II "SOUL"**

**7. Feb 1, 2021 - 19 Sh'vat 5781**

## **WAKE/KAVANA**

### **Start Each Day with Grateful Intention**

What's the first thing on your mind when waking up? Train to treat each day and start your morning with reverence and elegance, purpose and presence, guided by 3,000 year of Jewish liturgy, poetry and folklore.

**8. Feb 8, 2021 - 26 Sh'vat 5781**

## **SIT/SHIVITI**

### **Sit. Breath. Open Your Eyes.**

A closer look at an obscure psalm, an ancient visual technology, and other Jewish mystical contemplative practices.

**9. Feb 22, 2021 - 10 Adar 5781**

## **EAT/BARUCH**

### **L'chayim! Before Each Bite and When Done Dining**

The Jewish anthology of 100+ daily blessings bring more mindfulness, appreciation and an appetite for life lived large and present. How can gastro-judaism nourish your soul?

**10. March 1, 2021 - 17 Adar 5781**

## **POOP/YETZER**

Every human hole is holy and we even have a prayers for poop. Explore this and other embodied Jewish traditions that help us celebrate the sacredness of life in every limb, room, moment.

**11. March 8, 2021 - 24 Adar 5781**

## **SLEEP/SHMA**

### **Advanced Pillow Talk Training, for Body, Soul and Mind.**

Exploring Judaism's bedtime ritual as a useful tool to help us ease into sleep, and a portal into the mystical traditions of dreams and other divine mysteries.

**12. March 15, 2021 - 2 Nisan 5781**

## **LOVE/V'AHVTA**

### **Begin with Basics**

In your heart and on your tongue, in and under the bed, between the lines: One of Judaism's core values is refining the art of loving – self, other, all. The erotic and embodied meets the mystical meaning of encounter through Biblical, Medieval and contemporary Jewish literature.

## **UNIT III "TOGETHER"**

**13. April 12 2021 - 30 Nisan 5781**

## **COMMUNITY/MINYAN**

### **Who's In, Who Counts? The Evolving Norms of Communal Culture**

Jewish ritual culture prioritizes communal norms that define public space and collective context. What are the new normals and developing digital dimensions that redefine bonds, boundaries, and borders that divide and/or unite us?

**14. April 19, 2021 - 7 Iyyar 5781**

## **MAZELTOV/CONGRATULATIONS!**

### **Jewish Lifecycle Celebrations 101**

An overview of life cycle moments and the rituals and customs associated with them in Jewish traditions: from birth and coming of age, to weddings and divorce proceedings.

**15. April 26, 2021 - 14 Iyyar 5781**

## **KADDISH/MOURNING**

### **The Jewish Approaches to Death and Dying**

Judaism developed powerful and intricate paths to help us deal and heal when death and mourning happens. This closing session will provide an overview of Judaism's key perspective and practices that focus on the end of life.

**16. May 3, 2021 - 21 Iyyar 5781**

## **TZEDEK/JUSTICE**

### **What it Takes to Fix the World**

The pursuit of justice as a way to constantly improve the world and be of service is a key element of Jewish life. In a world of so many needs and ways for us to step up, what can we learn from our tradition about the most strategic, sustained and satisfying ways of making our world more just?

**17. May 10, 2021 - 28 Iyyar 5781**

## **LIFE-WRESTLERS/ISRAEL**

### **People, Land, Narrative**

What is the origin of Israel as a concept and how does tribal identity shift? Do we still choose to be chosen? We'll explore the history and ongoing evolution of this central and complex concept, finding new meanings for our personal and communal contemporary lives. We'll celebrate, learn a few key stories about the centrality of the land, the becoming of the state, and discuss our relationship with both concepts.

**18. May 17, 2021 - 6 Sivan 5781**

## **TIKKUN/TRANSFORMATION**

### **Closing Session**

Coming full circle for a wrap up conversation, reflection and celebration.