

Derech Chayim: A Way of Life  
The Jewish Path  
5770-5771  
2010-2011

**An Introduction to Jewish Life, Thought and Ritual**

A Project of Haver: The Boulder Rabbinic Fellowship

*Curriculum Developed by Rabbi Deborah R. Bronstein*

**Booklist :**

*How to Run a Traditional Jewish Household*, Blu Greenburg; Simon and Schuster, 1983.

*The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man*, Abraham Joshua Heschel; Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1951.

*Jewish Literacy*, Joseph Telushkin; William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1991.

*The Jewish Holidays: A Guide and Commentary*, Michael, Strassfeld; Harper & Row, 1985.

*Finding God: Selected Responses*, Rifat Soncino and Daniel B. Syme; UAHC Press, 2002.

*JPS Hebrew/English Tanach*

Students should choose a Chumash

\*You should be able to find all of these books on Amazon or Barnes & Noble. There is also a search engine "addall". They search 40 different booksellers and list by price, your choice new or used.

**Opening Thoughts:**

Derech Chayim is an ambitious class. We hope to present a basic introduction to over three thousand years of Jewish experience. We have set an impressive task for ourselves - and a joyful one. We have tried to create a syllabus that is thorough, but not overwhelming. We ask you to remember that this class was developed for serious beginners. No one should be nervous about what they do not know. The most important requirement for this class is a serious interest in

learning about and participating in Jewish life. As the sages taught, "The shy cannot learn and the irate cannot teach". Please ask your questions! Each of them is valuable and someone else is probably wondering the same thing.

We strongly recommend that you have access to the internet since this will give you access to class materials, calendars and class discussions.

If at any point you have questions, please contact Debbi Foster at 720-684-8844 or by email at [office@boulderhaver.org](mailto:office@boulderhaver.org) .

### **Outside of Class:**

We would like to create opportunities for learning outside of formal class time. This will allow us to use our class time more effectively and create stronger bonds between participants. We will be providing you with information about service, holidays and special programs in the community. We encourage you to participate.

**\*\***Items with double red asterisk are required.

### **Holidays:**

The class syllabus has all Jewish holidays listed in red. Please add these to your personal calendar. Please also note that many members of the Jewish community do not turn on computers or check email on Shabbat or holidays, so if you need a question answered please be sensitive to that.

There are specific requirements for the following holidays:

- \*\***Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur - attendance at a High Holiday Service (no charge for member of the class, but your family members will be charge)
- \*\***Purim - Attendance at a Megillah Reading
- \*\***Passover - Attendance at a Seder (community or family)
- \*\***Yom HaShoah - Attendance at the community program
- \*\***Shavuot - Attendance at the community program

**\*\***1 page Reflection papers should be submitted after each of these holidays to the rabbi whom you are working with for conversion, or, if you have not chosen one, then to the rabbi who taught the class. Please cc Debbi Foster.

### **Hebrew Marathon:**

**\*\***We will be offering a daylong immersion class in Hebrew phonetic reading. By the end of the day, you will recognize all of the letters of the alphabet and be able to combine them into simple words. You should also be able to read some of the prayers we have discussed in class.

### **Potluck Dinners and Snacks:**

We will also be eating together on several occasions, particularly the long workshops. Our custom is to bring vegetarian/dairy foods. If you bring a purchased dish, we ask that it be marked kosher. We will show you what this means and discuss it before hand.

### **Pre-Class Discussion Groups and Panels:**

At least twice in the course of the class, we will offer pre-class discussions and information groups to give students the opportunity to discuss questions that might not be adequately addressed in the short amount of time we have together in class. You may schedule additional meeting times with individual rabbis and the class coordinators.

### **Extended Classes and Alternative Sites:**

Students will attend several extended sessions during which we will study a variety of approaches to Shabbat, Theology and Passover. Periodically classes will meet in alternative sites. You will receive reminders and updates in the course of the year. Please watch your emails and check the website for updates, especially in the winter if heavy snow or ice is forecast.

### **Attending Shabbat and Holiday Services:**

In addition, we would like all of you, no matter what your denomination or specific interest, to attend a service at each of the Boulder synagogues: Aish Kodesh (Orthodox), Bonai Shalom (Conservative), Har HaShem (Reform), Nevei Kodesh (Renewal) and Pardes Levavot (Renewal).

<http://boulderaishkodesh.org/>

<http://www.bonaishalom.org/>

<http://harhashem.org/>

<http://www.neveikodesh.org/>

<http://pardeslevavot.org/>

### **Evaluation and Feedback:**

Each year, student feedback has served to improve the quality of our class for the next group of students. As a result we have made ongoing evaluations a regular feature of the class. Please feel free to speak with the class coordinators or any of the rabbis who are class instructors if you have questions, comments, or concerns. All of your feedback is welcome.

### **Books & Materials**

Please purchase or borrow copies of the books on the book list in plenty of time for the classes which require readings from those books. We recommend purchasing them to build your Jewish library.

There are weekly vocabulary sheets along with each week's reading assignment.

### **For Participants Considering Conversion:**

Derech Chayim offers a supportive environment to learn deeply about Judaism. This class, however, is not a conversion class. It is a prerequisite for those who are seriously contemplating conversion. We encourage you to raise issues that impact your preparation for conversion as part of this class.

Completing this class is only the first step in your preparation if you are exploring the possibility of conversion. If you are beginning this process, you may speak with a rabbi so that he/she can help you on your own individual path of study. Debbi Foster is also a resource for referral and information regarding the conversion process.

**We all wish you blessings along this path.**