

ORDINATION 2008



On Monday, May 26, 2008, we will be celebrating our sixth ordination ceremony. Held at Stephen S. Wise Temple in Los Angeles, the event draws hundreds of friends, family and Academy supporters who come to honor this tremendous milestone in the lives of the ordinees. Seven rabbinic students will be ordained this year. They are Tsvi Bar David, Rob Bonem, Dean Kertesz, Cantor Osnat Margalith (AJR, CA Cantorial School, '07), Arinna Moon, Laura Owens, and Ira Rosenfeld. Harris Shore will be ordained as a cantor. The ceremonies will begin promptly at 2 pm and we urge everyone to attend this very moving and memorable occasion.

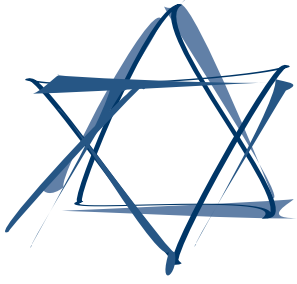
Front Row left to right: Harris Shore, Arinna Moon, Laura Owens, Osnat Margalith, Dean Kertesz, Rob Bonem
Back Row left to right: Tsvi Bar David, Ira Rosenfeld

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Academy for Jewish Religion | CA

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Serving as a bridge between the pillars of Judaism

Spring/Summer 2008 Volume 1 No.7



AJR, CA is a transdenominational, pluralistic institution dedicated to the training of rabbis, cantors, and chaplains. Our mission is to develop religious leaders steeped in Torah wisdom and tradition, and capable of transforming Jewish communities into places where all Jews can grow toward wholeness and well-being.



News briefs from...

The Rabbinical School

Rabbi Marc Mandel, Associate Rabbi of Beth Jacob Congregation in Beverly Hills, the largest Orthodox synagogue on the West Coast, has joined the Faculty as Rabbinical Advisor/Teacher of the Bet Midrash. Rabbi Aaron Parry, the Mashiach Ruchani (Spiritual Supervisor) of Shalhevet School, a Modern Orthodox Day School (K-12) in Los Angeles, is now teaching a course on the Shulchan Aruch, Jewish Oral Law code.

The Cantorial School

The Greenfeld Cantorial Library of Jewish Music is “up and running” with over 6000 pieces of Jewish music in its collection. A dedication will be forthcoming.

The Chaplaincy Program

Chaplaincy internships have expanded this year and now, in addition to hospitals and nursing homes, our students are also interning in the Los Angeles County Jail system.

Teaching to the Heart and Soul

As noted elsewhere on this page, our mission is clear. It is also clear why that mission is being accomplished and we are achieving precisely what it is that we have set out to do. While there are a number of contributing factors, the most significant relates to our innovative approach to teaching and training.

We believe that in order for our students to be most effective in their role as 21st century Jewish spiritual leaders, they must have in-depth knowledge of the Ancient Jewish Texts as well as the teachings and traditions of all of Judaism’s denominations. In this way, they are exposed to the full range of approaches to Jewish learning, values and practices.

At the same time, we also believe that in order to help their fellow Jews feel a deep, personal connection to Judaism, our graduates must be able to convey a very real sense of spirituality and have the ability to foster spiritual growth. As such, a major emphasis on spirituality is reflected throughout the curriculum. For example, in the class “Spiritual Dimensions in Jewish Texts,” the teacher focuses on the “heart and soul” dimensions of the human condition. From Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac and the intense trials we face in our daily lives, to Moses’ decision to leave a secure place to risk the unknown, to the story of Jonah who shifts from judgment and criticalness to learning compassion for others.

This unique approach is one of the major reasons why our graduates are able to make Judaism come “alive” to those whom they serve; to be able to humanize our forefathers and mothers and teach about the life lessons which are as relevant to us today as they were thousands of years ago.

Jacob Zigelboim, MD
Chair, Board of Directors

Rabbi Mel Gottlieb, PhD
President and CEO
Dean, Rabbinical School and Chaplaincy Program

Rabbi Stan Levy, JD
Executive Vice President

Tamar Frankiel, PhD
Dean of Academic Affairs

Hazzan Nathan Lam
Dean, Cantorial School

Cantor Perryne Anker
Assistant Dean, Cantorial School

Hazzan Eva Robbins
Director of Admissions and Recruitment

Alumni Making an Impact

The Academy is tremendously proud of the impact that our Alumni are making nationwide. In this issue, we profile two caring and compassionate individuals whose work is making a difference in the lives of those in need.



Rabbi Malka Mittelman, '06

Current Position:

Rabbi and Spiritual Care Counselor for Skirball Hospice, a program of the Los Angeles Jewish Home for the Aging.

Making an Impact:

Tending to the spiritual needs of the terminally ill and their families, of all faiths and backgrounds, throughout Los Angeles County.



Rabbi Anthony Elman, '07

Current Position:

Rabbi of the Los Angeles Jewish Home for the Aging's Grancell Village Campus.

Making an Impact:

Responsible for providing the spiritual care and growth of 400+ residents representing a wide range of connection to Judaism.

If you know of a synagogue or other Jewish institution that needs a Rabbinic or Chaplaincy intern, contact Rabbi Lynn Brody. For Cantorial interns, contact Cantor Perryne Anker. Both can be reached at 310-824-1586.

AJR, CA ANNOUNCES APPOINTMENT OF NEW PRESIDENT/CEO



Rabbi Mel Gottlieb, PhD has been appointed President and Chief Executive Officer of AJR, CA. In announcing the appointment, Dr. Jacob Zigelboim, Chairman of the Academy's Board of Directors said, "The entire Academy "family" is thrilled that a person of Rabbi Gottlieb's professional stature, intellectual prowess and personal warmth will be our new President and CEO."

"I am honored and thankful to HaShem," said Rabbi Gottlieb, "to have the opportunity to help lead the AJR, CA to achieve its goal of inspiring the next generation of rabbis, cantors and chaplains with the deep, insightful, just and loving teachings of Judaism. I can think of no greater or more meaningful gift than to train those who wish to dedicate their lives to serve the Jewish people and contribute to the healing of our world."

Ordained at Yeshiva University, Rabbi Gottlieb also holds an MSW and an MA in Jewish Philosophy from that institution. He received his PhD in Mythology/Depth Psychology at Pacifica Graduate Institute and has taught at Columbia University, Yeshiva University, and USC. For ten years, he served as the Rabbi of Kehillat Ma'arav in Santa Monica and, prior to that, was the Director of Hillel at MIT and Princeton. In addition to his new position, he will continue to serve as the Dean of AJR, CA's Rabbinical School and Chaplaincy Program.

Board of Directors Welcomes Three New Members

The Academy is fortunate to be led by a group of highly accomplished men and women who work tirelessly to further our mission. The most recent individuals to have been elected to join the Board exemplify professional excellence and civic commitment.

Leon Biederman, PhD is the President and CEO of LinQuest Corporation, a California-based business with a recognized expertise in Satellite Communications Engineering. The author of numerous publications, he also serves on the Board of Directors of the LA Hebrew High School and Camp Ramah in California.

Benjamin Bonavida, PhD is a Professor in the Department of Microbiology, Immunology, and Molecular Genetics at UCLA. A prolific author and noted researcher, he is a member of the American Association for Cancer Research and the UCLA Cancer Center Advisory Committee as well as President of the Israel Cancer Research Foundation in Los Angeles.

Julie G. Madorsky, MD is a physician, author, editor, legal and legislative activist and consultant to state and federal government. A Clinical Professor of Medicine at UCLA's David Geffen School of Medicine and at the Western University of Health Sciences, she has received national recognition for her work on disability issues and was named "US Physician of the Year" by President Ronald Reagan.

ANNUAL RETREAT A SUCCESS



Over 80 people, including students, faculty, administration and Board members, attended the Annual Student Retreat held on February 10 – 12 at Brandeis-Bardin. The theme of the 2008 Retreat was “Going Deeper with Self, Others, and the Divine” and the scholar-in-residence was Rabbi Alan Lew, the Director of Makor Or, the Center for Jewish Meditation in San Francisco and one of the leaders of the burgeoning Jewish Meditation movement. AJR, CA student Rob Bonem, along with fellow students, Sharon Colbert, Barbara Singer and Avivah Winocur Erlick, planned the weekend activities which included a variety of workshops as well as hiking, Israeli dancing, etc. In commenting on the weekend’s success, AJR, CA President, Rabbi Mel Gottlieb, said “I think that the students had an excellent learning experience, got to know their fellow students in new ways, and explored a specific meditative technique that can deepen their spiritual path.”

New Rabbinical Association Founded

Musmachim of the Academy for Jewish Religion, California, or MAJR, is the official name of the new professional rabbinical association founded by pluralistic rabbis who have graduated from and been ordained by AJR, CA. Its purpose is to “provide a supportive environment for rabbis facing the challenges of making Judaism more meaningful and relevant in today’s society.” This includes providing guidelines to support the spiritual growth and leadership of the members, as well as a collegial forum that offers scholarly interchange and opportunities for professional growth. The first slate of MAJR officers are Rabbi Lynn Brody ’05 and Rabbi Miriam Hamrell ’03, Co-Presidents; Rabbi Malka Mittelman ’06, Vice President; Rabbi Avi Navah ’06, Treasurer; and Rabbi Michael Barclay ’07, Secretary.

Alumni to Study in Israel

Rabbi Min Kantrowitz ’04, Rabbi Alicia Magal ’03, Rabbi Paula Marcus ’04, and Rabbi Yocheved Mintz ’04 have all been accepted to study this coming summer, at the well respected Hartman Institute in Jerusalem. They will be enrolled in the Institute’s Center for Rabbinic Enrichment which offers rabbis of all denominations “intellectual and professional support to help maximize their pivotal role in Jewish life.”

AJR, CA Leader Chosen to Lead Holocaust Reparations Program

Rabbi Stan Levy, one of the Academy’s co-founders who is also a senior attorney at the national law firm of Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP, has been chosen to serve as the volunteer national director for Bet Tzedek (The House of Justice) Legal Services pro bono initiative to assist Holocaust survivors seeking German “Ghetto Work” Reparations. This will be done through the establishment of legal clinics in major cities across the United States. In October 2007, the German government created a new reparations program which provides a one-time 2000 Euro (approximately \$3000 US) payment to Holocaust survivors who worked while living in a German-controlled Ghetto. Under Rabbi Levy’s direction, scores of social service agencies and hundreds of pro bono attorneys across the country will receive training and support as they provide legal assistance to survivors in filling out the German reparations application forms.

On February 3, 2008, the Academy held the official dedication of the “Abby Deborah Spivack Memorial Chaplaincy Library” honoring the memory of the AJR, CA Chaplaincy student whose “life was filled with good deeds, learning and caring.”