



THE TIKVAH FUND

165 E. 56th Street
New York, New York 10022

Jewish Idea of God
May 27, 2014 – June 1, 2014

Dean: Jonathan Silver
Core Instructor: Micah Goodman

I. Description:

If ideas have something like gravitational force, then the idea of God is as powerful and massive an idea as any. A change in one's notion of the divine shapes and re-shapes the other ideas that govern our lives—ideas about power, freedom, time, meaning, and politics, just to name a few.

This seminar will explore, specifically, how the Jewish idea of God has affected the way we think about *time* and *power*. God, as presented in the Bible and other influential sources of Jewish thought, is outside of nature and thus beyond our control. Such an idea is in direct contrast to a theology that finds God, or gods, in the forces of nature and thus encourages men to seek out means – sacrificial, magical and otherwise – to manipulate those forces. At the same time, the Jewish idea of God necessitates a linear conception of time in contrast to the cyclical understanding that would seem to follow from observing the revolutions of natural phenomena: of heavenly bodies and the seasons, of growth and decay, of aging and birth. The God of the Bible, standing outside of creation, makes men and women in His own image; and like God, men and women are able to find meaning and purpose outside the cycles of created nature. In this way, *history* emerges as the domain of human-divine interaction and the idea of linear movement that serves a divine purpose is introduced.

Drawing on select texts from throughout the Hebrew Bible and Jewish philosophy, this course will also explore the political consequences of these Jewish ideas of time and power. Does such a scheme promote a restless, active politics that is eager to bring to fruition the plan of the divine in history, or a moderate and humble political philosophy that understands the limits of human agency given the distance between God and humankind? How does the idea of the Messiah alter the fundamental tenets of Jewish theology? Should the messianic age be understood as an escape from a world dominated by politics or a completion and perfection of such a world?



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II. Course Calendar:

| Tuesday, May 27 | | |
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| Theme: The Transcendent God, 1 | | |
| <i>Time</i> | <i>Lead Instructor</i> | <i>Texts</i> |
| 8:30 am | Welcome Breakfast | |
| 9:45 - 11:45 am | Micah Goodman | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maimonides, <i>Guide of the Perplexed</i> I.32, 54-59, 68; II.1, 24-25; III.51 [<i>Hebrew and English</i>] • Maimonides, <i>Mishne Torah</i>, Sefer Mada, Yesodei HaTorah, ch. 1-2 [<i>Hebrew and English</i>] |
| 2:00 - 4:00 pm | Micah Goodman | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enumah Elish • Genesis 1 • Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Temura, 16a • Recommended: Yehezkel Kaufmann, <i>The Religion of Israel from its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile</i>, (New York: Schocken Books, 1972), ch. 2-3. |
| 5:00 - 7:00 pm | Dinner and Participant Introductions | |

| Wednesday, May 28 | | |
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| Theme: The Transcendent God, 2 | | |
| <i>Time</i> | <i>Lead Instructor</i> | <i>Texts</i> |
| 9:45 - 11:45 am | Micah Goodman | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deuteronomy • Leviticus • Isaiah 55 |
| 2:00 - 4:00 pm | Micah Goodman | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Israel Knohl, <i>The Divine Symphony: The Bible's Many Voices</i>, (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 2003), pp. 71-86. • Maimonides, <i>Guide of the Perplexed</i> I.54 |
| 5:00 - 7:00 pm | Clifford Orwin | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genesis 17-19 |



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| Thursday, May 29 | | |
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| Theme: Jewish Reactions to the Transcendent God | | |
| <i>Time</i> | <i>Lead Instructor</i> | <i>Texts</i> |
| 9:45 - 11:45 am | Micah Goodman | Judah Halevi, <i>The Kuzari</i> [<i>Hebrew and English</i>] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction • Part 1: 1-15, 33-42 • Part 2: 1-2, 32-34 • Part 3: 1-5, 17 • Part 4: 15, 17, 23 • Part 5: 14, 20 |
| 2:00 - 4:00 pm | Micah Goodman | |
| 5:00 – 7:00 pm | Dinner with Eric Cohen, Executive Director of the Tikvah Fund | |

| Friday, May 30 | | | |
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| Candle Lighting: 8:01 pm | | | |
| <i>Time</i> | <i>Instructor</i> | <i>Text</i> | <i>Location</i> |
| 9:45-11:45 am | Micah Goodman | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deut. 17 • I Kings | Tikvah Center |
| 1:15 - 3:15 pm | Jacob Wright | Jacob L. Wright, <i>David, King of Israel, and Caleb in Biblical Memory</i> , (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. xi-xii, 80-97 | |
| 6:45 – 7:45 pm | Optional <i>Mincha</i> and <i>Kabbalat Shabbat</i> services at Congregation Shearith Israel | | Congregation Shearith Israel |
| 8:00 pm | Private Shabbat Dinner, followed by a lecture by Rabbi Meir Soloveichik on “The Theology of Michael Wyschogrod” | | |



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| Saturday, May 31 | | | |
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| Shabbat Ends: 9:09 pm | | | |
| <i>Time</i> | <i>Instructor</i> | <i>Text</i> | <i>Location</i> |
| 8:15 am | Optional morning services at Congregation Shearith Israel | | Congregation Shearith Israel |
| 9:10 am | Optional morning services at Congregation Shearith Israel – approximate start time of <i>Nishmat</i> | | |
| 11:15 am | Optional learning session with Rabbi Meir Soloveichik at Congregation Shearith Israel | | |
| 12:00 pm | Optional Kiddush at Congregation Shearith Israel | | |
| 12:30 pm | Private Lunch at Congregation Shearith Israel | | |
| 2:00 pm | Micah Goodman | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecclesiastes 1 • Ezekiel 38-39 • Isaiah 2 • Genesis 6-9 • Mircea Eliade, <i>The Myth of Eternal Return</i> (New York: Bollingen Foundation, Inc., 1954), pp. 3-6; 34-48; 62-73; 102-112; 141-147 | |
| 6:45 pm | Meir Soloveichik | Seuda Shlishit and Optional class on <i>Pirkei Avot</i> with members of Congregation Shearith Israel | |
| 7:45 pm | Optional <i>Mincha</i> and <i>Maariv</i> at Congregation Shearith Israel | | |

| Sunday, June 1 | | |
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| Theme: The Jewish Idea of God in Light of History – America and Israel | | |
| <i>Time</i> | <i>Lead Instructor</i> | <i>Texts</i> |
| 9:45 - 11:45 am | Jonathan Silver | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steven M. Cohen and Arnold M. Eisen, <i>The Jew Within: Self, Family, and Community in America</i>, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), pp. 13-42 • Karl Marx, “The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte” pp. 595-597 • John Locke, <i>Second Treatise of Government</i>, ch. VI |



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| | | <p>[<i>Hebrew and English</i>]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alexis de Tocqueville, <i>Democracy in America</i> [<i>Hebrew and English</i>]<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ I.1.3, pp. 46-52○ II.1.11, pp. 439-443○ II.2.2, pp. 482-484 |
| 2:00 - 4:00 pm | Micah Goodman | |
| 5:00 - 7:00 pm | Closing Dinner | |



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III. Faculty Biographies:

Core Instructor

Micah Goodman

Micah Goodman is a leading voice on Judaism, Zionism, the Bible, and the challenges and opportunities facing Israel and contemporary world Jewry. Dr. Goodman is the author of two Israeli bestsellers on canonical Jewish texts: *The Dream of the Kuzari* published in 2012 and *The Secrets of the Guide for the Perplexed* published in 2011, both by Kinneret Zmora-Bitan Dvir. A distinguished speaker and teacher, Micah lectures regularly at Israel's leading universities, think tanks and cultural venues, to audiences that include Israel's political and national leaders, and around North America. Micah's analyses of the Torah portion are featured in a weekly show broadcast by Israel's leading television network, Channel 2. Micah earned a PhD in Jewish Thought from The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and lectures at his alma mater. Micah also serves as a senior fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem and is the recipient of numerous awards for his publications.

Dean

Jonathan Silver

Jonathan Silver is Director of Academic Programs at the Tikvah Fund, where he is responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of advanced institutes and other proceedings at the Tikvah Center in midtown Manhattan. He was educated at Tufts University, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and holds a Ph.D. from the Department of Government at Georgetown University. He maintains research interests in ancient Greek and Hebraic political thought, and the theory and practice of American government.

Visiting Speakers

Eric Cohen

Eric Cohen has been the Executive Director of the Tikvah Fund since 2007. He was the founder and remains editor-at-large of the *New Atlantis*, serves as the publisher of the *Jewish Review of Books* and *Mosaic*, and currently serves on the board of directors of the Ethics and Public Policy Center, the Witherspoon Institute, and *National Affairs* and on the Editorial Advisory Board of *First Things*. Mr. Cohen has published in numerous academic and popular journals, magazines, and newspapers, including the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Washington Post*, *Weekly Standard*, *Commentary*, *The New Republic*, *First Things*, and numerous others. He is the author of *In the Shadow of Progress: Being Human in the Age of Technology* (2008) and co-editor of *The Future is Now: America Confronts the New Genetics* (2002). He was previously managing editor of the *Public Interest* and served as a senior consultant to the President's Council on Bioethics.



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Clifford Orwin

Clifford Orwin is a professor of political science, classics, and Jewish studies at the University of Toronto. He is also a member of the Hoover Institution's Task Force on Virtues of a Free Society at Stanford University. He is a regular contributor to the *Globe and Mail*, Canada's national newspaper of record, and to numerous American publications. He is the author of *The Humanity of Thucydides* (Princeton University Press, 2nd ed., 1997) and coeditor and coauthor of *The Legacy of Rousseau* (University of Chicago Press, 1997); he has also written dozens of articles on classical, modern, contemporary, and Jewish political thought. He is currently completing a book for the general reader entitled *Deeply Compassionate*. He received his BA in history from Cornell University and his MA and PhD in political science from Harvard University and has taught as a visitor at Harvard and Chicago as well as in Jerusalem, Paris, and Lisbon.

Meir Soloveichik

Rabbi Dr. Meir Y. Soloveichik is director of the Zahava and Moshael Straus Center for Torah and Western Thought at Yeshiva University and the rabbi of Congregation Shearith Israel, the oldest Jewish congregation in the United States. Prior to this, Soloveichik served as associate rabbi at Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun in Manhattan. Rabbi Soloveichik has lectured throughout the United States, in Europe, and in Israel to both Jewish and non-Jewish audiences on topics relating to Jewish theology, bioethics, wartime ethics, and Jewish-Christian relations. His essays on these subjects have appeared in *The Wall Street Journal*, *Commentary*, *First Things*, *Azure*, *Tradition*, and the *Torah U-Madda Journal*.

Jacob Wright

Jacob L. Wright is Associate Professor of Hebrew Bible at the Candler School of Theology of Emory University. He is author of *Rebuilding Identity: The Nehemiah Memoir and Its Earliest Readers* (De Gruyter) and two related works on the Bible's most celebrated ruler: *King David's Reign Revisited* (Aldina / Apple iBooks) and *David, King of Israel, and Caleb in Biblical Memory* (Cambridge University Press). He is currently at work on an exciting new book on the Bible to be published by Simon & Schuster – Atria.



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IV. Our Mutual Commitment

Our pledge to you is that the program will be excellent and that the teachers are, in every case, among the best people in the world teaching the subjects they are teaching. Your pledge to us is that you will invest yourselves in the texts and the seminars, and do the work to the fullest extent of your talents. You have put your everyday work on hold to join us, so we know you come to us with great interest and commitment. We will insist that you continue that commitment—a commitment to attending each and every session, a commitment to coming to class on time, a commitment to doing all the readings—throughout the duration of the Institute. If anyone fails to honor his or her commitment, he or she will be dismissed from the Institute.