



THE TIKVAH FUND

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

Jews, Power and the Bible

July 28, 2014 – August 1, 2014

Dean: Nathan Laufer

Instructor: Micah Goodman

I. Description

David Ben Gurion once remarked that Zionism is a unique kind of revolution, different from all others including those that took place in England, France, America, and Russia. In each of those revolutions a nation rose up against the people who ruled over it. In contrast, Zionism is a rising up of a nation against itself, an attempt by the Jewish people to break free of its national identity. The crux of the Zionist rebellion, according to Ben Gurion, lies in the transition from political passivity to political activism. What is more, Ben Gurion claimed that the inspiration for the Jewish people's transition from powerless to powerful derived from the Bible.

Ben Gurion had good reason to look in the Bible for the ideas that could inspire and guide the Jewish people in moving from powerlessness to power. To a large extent, this is the essence of the biblical story. At the center of the biblical narrative we find the story of the Hebrew slaves in Egypt who later evolved into conquerors of Canaan. This transition from weakness to strength, which is the heart of the Bible, will guide us in our seminar as we explore biblical perspectives on power. We will focus on two types of power – religious power and political power – and draw on these to rethink the role of power in Zionist thought.



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II. Course Calendar:

Monday, July 28th: The Relationship Between Religion and Power

9:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Reading:

- Yehezkel Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel from its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1972), pp. 40 – 53, 101-121.

Tuesday, July 29th: The Religious Nature of the Political Sphere, part 1

9:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Reading:

- Book of Deuteronomy (Devarim), Chapters 1-12

Wednesday, July 30th: The Religious Nature of the Political Sphere, part 2

9:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Reading:

- Book of Deuteronomy (Devarim), Chapters 1-12

Thursday, July 31st: The Failed Experiment from the Time of King Solomon

9:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Reading:

- Book of Kings I, Chapters 1-13

Friday, August 1st: Zionist Perspectives on Power

9:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Reading:

- Micah Joseph Berdichevski in Arthur Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*, (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1997) pages 289-301.

**Note: Students should bring a Tanakh to class each day.*



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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. Dr. Goodman is the CEO and Rosh Midrasha of Ein Prat Academy and he also serves as a senior fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem and is the recipient of numerous awards for his publications.

Dean

Nathan Laufer

Nathan Laufer has been Director of Israel Programs for the Tikvah Fund since 2008. Prior to that, he served as President and CEO of the Wexner Heritage Foundation and Founding Director of the Partnership for Effective Learning and Innovative Education (PELIE). Rabbi Laufer received his Juris Doctor from Fordham University, Rabbinic Ordination from Yeshiva University and Leadership Educator certification from Harvard University. He is the author of *The Genesis of Leadership: What the Bible tells us about Vision, Values and Leading Change*, and *Leading the Passover Journey: The Seder's meaning Revealed, the Haggadah's Story Retold* (Jewish Lights Publishing).



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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.