

# Rabbi Gilah Kletenik

Learning in Preparation for Shavuot and Receiving the Torah

Friday Night, May 31

@ Kol Sasson

6:00 PM

Kabbalat Shabbat & Maariv

"The Fifth Cubit:  
Rabbis Who Weren't"

A subversive Talmudic text provokes us to consider the relation between learning and lived-life, questioning these separate worlds.



Shabbat Morning, June 1

@ Kol Sasson

9:15 AM

following Torah reading

"Emergencies at the Border, or How the Torah  
Lands in Instability"

Using the parsha to understand the Torah more broadly, we ask how we are to conceive the boundaries of the self.

Shabbat Afternoon, June 1

@ The Lennons, 9100 Keystone

5:00 PM

"Putting Feet to the Fire: Pressuring the  
Rabbinic Abstract"

Our study of a Talmudic "thriller" gives voice to persons and perspectives on the periphery.

Gilah Kletenik is a Jewish educator, rabbi, and academic. She is a doctoral candidate in Hebrew and Judaic Studies at New York University where she focuses on philosophy and Jewish thought. Gilah was featured as a young leader re-imagining Jewish life in The Jewish Week's "36 Under 36," is an inaugural recipient of The Covenant Foundation's Pomegranate Prize, and is a Wexner Graduate Fellow.

# Get to know Gilah Kletenik!

What is one text that has recently inspired you?

Yesterday, I picked up *The Full Pomegranate: Poems of Avrom Sutzkever*, a recently published collection of Sutzkever's poems, selected and translated from the Yiddish by Richard J. Fein. I've had nominal exposure to his poems before now and, already, in this brief encounter, I am struck -- and inspired! -- by the both the singularity and universality of his voice. Not to say the least of its energy and imagery. To wit, "I love the unadulterated taste of a word that won't betray itself, / not some sweet-and-sour hybrid with a strange taste."

Who do you consider your spiritual/intellectual mentor?

Alright, I am interpreting "mentor" quite liberally, in that I have never actually encountered said mentor, but have invested hours in finding my way through his thought. So, I'd say Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995), the French-Jewish philosopher, who insists on the Jewishness of "ethics as first philosophy," -- that we are always already ethically responsible for the other and that our own subjectivity is constituted by this a priori infinite responsibility. Levinas models for us the fecundity and radicality of Jewish philosophical ideas and their indispensability for navigating contemporary predicaments.

What is a question you are currently grappling with?

Of late, I have been thinking critically about identity and difference, sameness and otherness, the universal and the particular. Specifically considering: is it possible to respect both without exalting either one of them as supreme? Is there a place for particularity that neither dissolves it amidst the whole nor fetishizes it as paramount? Might we assert the significance of the universal without surrendering to its totalizing forces?