



## **Adult Learning Committee Presents Scholar-In-Residence, Jacob Meskin, PhD**

**Academic Advisor and Senior Lecturer in the Me'ah Program at Hebrew College**

**Friday, April 28, 2023**

[Shabbat Evening Service](#) | 6:30 pm followed by Oneg Shabbat sponsored by the Adult Learning Committee.

***"From The Mind To The Heart: Modern Jewish Thought As A Resource for Spiritual Life Today"***

Although many modern Jews find it hard to talk about, we often retain a lingering interest in "the G word". Could God be more than just an idea in a lot of old books, but perhaps the object of a serious personal quest, even ultimately a Reality for me as a person? This talk will examine the work of twentieth and twenty-first century Jewish thinkers, to see if we can learn from their sophisticated ways of approaching this question. These thinkers have, like ourselves, grappled with the unique conditions of modern life, including the great growth of the physical sciences, the rise of individualism, the loss of traditional authority, and the prevalence of universal ideals. We will study moving excerpts on spirituality taken from thinkers such as Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig, R. Joseph Soloveitchik, Emmanuel Levinas, and R. Shagar, and will ask about how we might adapt some of their insights today.

**Saturday, April 29, 2023**

[Shabbat Morning Service](#) | 9:30 am followed by bagel nosh at 10:30 am

***Torah Study: "From Sacrifice to Aspiration"*** | 10:45 - 11:45 am

In this facilitated study session, we will explore the insights of a range of commentators on the weekly parshah, "*Acharei Mot/Kedoshim*". While the commentators find a vast number of ideas in this parshah, we will be focusing on the themes of guilt, sacrifice, the limits of being a human being, and the aspiration for personal and spiritual growth. We will spend some time, at the outset, discussing what it means for modern people today to engage in studying the Bible, and how they should (and should not) approach it. In addition to looking at selections from classical Bible commentators, we will also be examining modern psychological and anthropological perspectives including those of women commentators, and will delve into the remarkable recent work of Aviva Zornberg. All materials will be made available with accompanying English translations.



**Sunday, April 30, 2023**

**Breakfast hosted by Brotherhood | 9:30 am**

**“The Origins of Strife and the Current Situation in Israel Today” | 10:00 - 11:00 am**

Given the seriousness of the current situation in Israel today, it may seem a fool’s errand to insist on the importance of trying to gain historical background and conceptual sophistication, as opposed to rushing forward with a solution. Yet the history of modern Israel, and the set of intellectual issues that come along with that history, have together created the most deeply complicated of all international political and religious problems today. In addition, there are other reasons that bear on how American Jews in particular come to form their opinions about Israel. This presentation will introduce some of the most significant and enduring historical, legal, political, and philosophical problems connected with the modern state of Israel. It will also delve into other factors that shape how American Jews view the situation in Israel. Neither blame nor guilt -- of which there is more than enough to go around on all sides -- is likely to help us understand what is happening. The goal is not to take sides, but rather to try to raise the level of knowledge, and of self-knowledge, of this astoundingly fraught conflict, so as to help you to work your own point of view.

*To learn more about Jacob Meskin, PhD, visit page 3.*



### **Learn more about Professor Jacob Meskin, PhD:**



Dr. Jacob Meskin is currently Academic Advisor and Senior Lecturer in the Me'ah Program at Hebrew College. Meskin served for many years as the Academic Director and Teacher Trainer for the Me'ah Program, and is co-author of the curriculum for Hebrew College's Parenting Through A Jewish Lens program. In addition to Me'ah, Meskin teaches for a number of synagogue and professional groups in the Boston area.

Meskin was the inaugural holder of the Ruderman Chair in Jewish Studies at Northeastern University during the 2009-2010 academic year, and has taught at Princeton University, Rutgers University, the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Yeshiva University, Williams College, and Lehigh University. His articles have appeared in *Modern Judaism*, *The Journal of Religion*, *Soundings*, *Levinas Studies*, *Judaism*, *Cross Currents*, *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, and in several edited volumes. In addition to having offered academic courses in different areas of Jewish studies and Jewish education, he has taught courses in Hindu philosophy and in Buddhist philosophy.

Despite being a transplant from New York City, Meskin has become an avid Boston sports fan. His hobbies include chess (which he thinks he's good at), Go (which he wishes he were good at), nineteenth century English novels, old movies, and Indian vegetarian food. Dr. Meskin lives with his wife and daughter in Brookline, MA.