



## Rabbis Without Borders Student Retreat

# Re-Imagining Synagogues and the Rabbinate

There is a growing consensus that the institutions of American Jewish life are not changing rapidly enough to meet the needs of the Jewish community. Synagogues are often the target of the harshest criticism in this regard. If there is to be a vibrant Jewish future in America, it will have to be shaped by rabbis who have the creativity and the know-how to re-imagine, both the synagogue and the rabbinate. This retreat will introduce participants to some of the most innovative thinking in the field. It will also provide practical training for future rabbis who want to acquire the skills to help shape new approaches to American Jewish life.

**Date:** Nov. 13-16, 2014

**Place:** Brandeis-Bardin Institute, Brandeis, CA

**Faculty:** Rabbis Ed Feinstein, Noa Kushner and  
Sid Schwarz

*Five students per seminary will be nominated by their school.*

Registration is a \$100/student with a generous travel subsidy provided

For more information, contact Zahara Zahav at [zzahav@clal.org](mailto:zzahav@clal.org) or 212-779-3300 x123.

**Co-Sponsoring Seminaries:** Hebrew Union College (New York, Cincinnati, and Los Angeles), The Jewish Theological Seminary, Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, Rabbinical School at Hebrew College (Boston), Academy for Jewish Religion (NY and LA), Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies, Yeshivat Chovevei Torah Rabbinical School, Yeshivat Maharat, International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism and ALEPH Rabbinic Program.

Underwritten by:

Albin Family Foundation, Naomi and Nehemiah Cohen Foundation, Barbara Epstein Foundation, Katz Family Foundation, Mark Lainer, Dr. Michael Levy, Alan Lindy, Joseph and Rebecca Meyerhoff Awards Committee, Devin Schain and the Wohl Family Foundation

## Faculty Bios

**Ed Feinstein** is senior rabbi of Valley Beth Shalom in Encino, California. He is an instructor at the Ziegler Rabbinical School of the American Jewish University, and a member of the faculty at the Wexner Heritage Program and the Shalom Hartman Institute. Formerly, he served as the founding director of the Solomon Schechter Academy of Dallas, Texas, and the Executive Director of Camp Ramah in California. Ed is the author of three award-winning books and the father of three wonderful children, whose character he fully credits to his wife, Rabbi Nina Feinstein. Every Friday afternoon, he bakes brownies from a recipe revealed to his ancestors on Mt Sinai.

**Noa Kushner** is the founding rabbi of The Kitchen in San Francisco. She received her B.A. in Religious Studies from Brown University and was ordained by Hebrew Union College, New York. She then served as the Hillel Rabbi for Sarah Lawrence College and Stanford University. After founding The Kitchen, Kushner was profiled in *San Francisco Magazine's* "Who Runs SF" Power Issue and was featured in the *Newsweek /Daily Beast* "Rabbis to Watch" list. Kushner is on faculty of the Wexner Heritage Program and speaks nationally. Noa is married to Rabbi Michael Lezak and is the mother of three daughters: Zella, Bluma and Minna.

**Sid Schwarz** serves as a senior fellow at Clal: The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership where he directs the Clergy Leadership Incubator (CLI) a program that trains rabbis to be visionary spiritual leaders. He founded and led PANIM: The Institute for Jewish Leadership and Values for 21 years. He is also the founding rabbi of Adat Shalom Reconstructionist Congregation in Bethesda, MD where he continues to teach and lead services. Dr. Schwarz holds a Ph.D. in Jewish history and is the author of two groundbreaking books--*Finding a Spiritual Home: How a New Generation of Jews Can Transform the American Synagogue* (Jewish Lights, 2000) and *Judaism and Justice: The Jewish Passion to Repair the World* (Jewish Lights, 2006). Sid was awarded the prestigious Covenant Award for his pioneering work in the field of Jewish education and was named by *Newsweek* as one of the 50 most influential rabbis in North America. Sid's newest book is *Jewish Megatrends: Charting the Course of the American Jewish Future* (Jewish Lights, 2013).

## Comments from past participants

I never considered going into the congregational rabbinate. But the conversations I had with my peers and with the presenters challenged me to consider that option quite seriously and helped me to imagine new models of building community.

Lindsey Healey-Pollack, Jewish Theological Seminary

This retreat helps future rabbis become savvy and effective leaders of communities with critical visioning skills. It was an essential complement to my seminary training.

Sarah Barasch-Hagans, Reconstructionist Rabbinical College

The content (of the retreat sessions) was unlike anything else I've experienced, not so much in its individual pieces as in its totality and inter-connectedness. It provided a real systemic approach (to spiritual community building) which I really appreciated."

E. David Curiel, Aleph Rabbinical Program

To paraphrase Psalms 4:2, (the retreat) expanded me in areas where I was constrained and of limited vision.

Jay LeVine, Hebrew Union College

*Tefila* was the best part of the retreat for me. Being forced to craft and create a pluralistic *tefilah* space was both challenging and exciting. The preparation was the key. The buy-in from each school/denomination, which was forged in the *Tefilah* Committee conversations in the weeks prior to the retreat, was crucial to our success.

Abe Schacter-Gampel, Yeshivat Chovevei Torah