



ALEPH

Ordination Program

הינני/Hineini:

Answering the Call to Sacred Service

Smicha Ceremony

Sunday, January 12, 2025

12 Tevet, 5785

Denver, Colorado

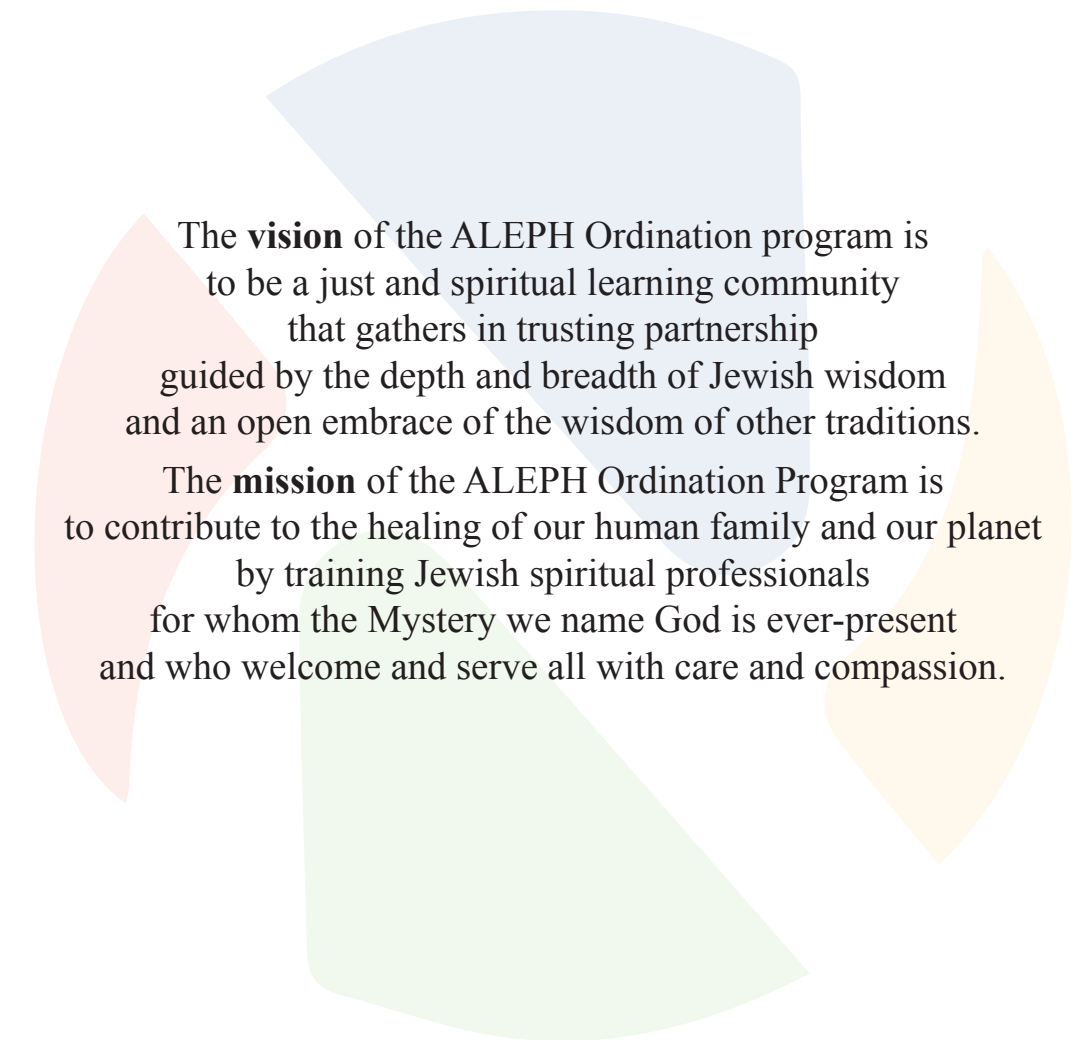
ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal is the core institution of Jewish renewal, promoting a joyous, creative, and spiritually rich contemporary Judaism that infuses ancient Jewish wisdom with a modern, egalitarian and socially-progressive consciousness.

ALEPH brings spiritual vitality and passion into the daily lives of Jews through programs that empower leadership, build communities, and generate powerful experiences and practical resources.

OHALAH, Association of Rabbis and Cantors for Jewish Renewal, a sister organization of ALEPH, is a trans-denominational association of rabbis, cantors and students of these professions. The Rabbinic Pastor Association is a branch of OHALAH and includes rabbinic pastors, chaplains and students in these professions.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge that the Boulder Valley is the traditional territory of the Arapaho and Cheyenne peoples. In recognition of this history and our commitment to supporting Indigenous communities, we have made a donation to Right Relationship Boulder, Land Projects Fund, to help expand Indigenous peoples' access to their ancestral lands in the Boulder Valley. We believe that meaningful acknowledgment includes tangible action toward justice and healing. rightrelationshipboulder.org/donate



The **vision** of the ALEPH Ordination program is to be a just and spiritual learning community that gathers in trusting partnership guided by the depth and breadth of Jewish wisdom and an open embrace of the wisdom of other traditions.

The **mission** of the ALEPH Ordination Program is to contribute to the healing of our human family and our planet by training Jewish spiritual professionals for whom the Mystery we name God is ever-present and who welcome and serve all with care and compassion.

Learn more about ALEPH programs and projects at aleph.org.

ALEPH Ordination Ceremony

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WELCOMING OUR NEW COLLEAGUES:

Rabbi Rivkah Coburn

Rabbi Igal Harmelin

Rabbi Elizheva Hurvich

Rabbi Josh Jeffreys

Rabbi Zvika Krieger

Rabbi Aaron Rotenberg

Rabbinic Pastor Nira Scheer

Hazzan Barukh Solomon

Rabbi Dorith Steinberg

Rabbi Lorin Troderman

THANK YOU TO OUR TEACHERS

*For their vision, their wisdom, and their abiding support,
and without whom we would not stand before you today.*

R' Jordan Bendat-Appell	R' Hannah Laner
R' Phyllis Berman	R' Amichai Lau Lavie
R' Leila Gal Berner, Ph.D.	R' Ebn Leader
Sylvia Boorstein	R' Joshua Lesser
Tara Brach	H' Abbe Lyons
H' Diana Brewer	R' James Jacobson Maisels
Aviva Chernick	R' Natan Margalit, Ph.D.
Danny Cohen	R' Miriam Margles
Jack Cohen	Dr. Daniel Matt
Shoshana Cooper	R' Vivie Mayer
R' David Cooper z"l	R' Dr. Ariel Mayse
R' Laura Duhan-Kaplan, Ph.D.	R' Dr. Jay Michaelson
R' Diane Elliot	R' Sue Morningstar
Dr. Yakir Englander	R' Marcia Prager
RP Shulamit Fagan	R' Linda Potemken
R' Mimi Feigelson	R' Aviva Richman
R' Fern Feldman	R' Or Rose
R' Tirzah Firestone, Ph.D.	Dr. Yosef Rosen
Zoketsu Norman Fischer	Tuere Sala
R' Elliot Ginsburg, Ph.D.	R' Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, z"l
R' Aubrey Glazer, Ph.D.	R' Shalom Schachter
R' Shefa Gold	Anne Wilson Schaefer
R' Zelig Golden	R' SaraLeya Schley
R' Art Green	R' David Seidenberg
R' Nadya Gross	R' Daniel Siegel
R' Victor Gross	R' Hanna Tiferet Siegel
R' Chaya Gusfield	R' Deb Smith
R' Kohenet Jill Hammer, Ph.D.	R' Dr. Oren Steinitz
R' Lizzi Heydemann	R' Ariel Stone
R' Aryeh Hirschfield z"l	R' Dr. Shulamit Sapir Thiede
R' Jeff Hoffman	R' Orna Triguboff
Dr. Thomas Hübl	R' Jericho Vincent
R' Burt Jacobson z"l	R' Arthur Waskow
R' Ruth Gan Kagan	R' David Zaslow
H' Jack Kessler z"l	R' Shawn Zevit

CELEBRATE THE CLASS OF 2025 WITH A DONATION

Chazak Chazak v'Nitchazek
May We Go from Strength to Strength!

ALEPH Ordination Program has shaped our journeys in countless ways. We wish to create opportunities for others. Your gift will strengthen the program and allow current and future students to follow this path.

With deep gratitude,
Musmachimot 2025/5785



SEND A BLESSING TO THE 2025 MUSMACHIMOT!



MUSICIANS

Gathering Music
Lisa Sokolov

Processional & Recessional

**R' Kolby Morris Dahary w/ H' Shayndel Adler,
H' Diana Brewer, R' Rachel Goldberg, Laura Lenes,
Raechel Rosen, Lena Sclove, Yoel Sykes, Dan Yolles**

HOLDING THE CHUPPAH

representing the four ALEPH ordination programs & OHALAH:

Rabbinic Student Laura Lenes
representing ALEPH Student Body

Hazzan Stephanie Weishaar
ALEPH Board of Directors

Rabbi Jeff Roth
AOP Governors

Rabbinic Pastor Chaya Lerner
Rabbinic Pastors Association/OHALAH Leadership

ROOTS & BRANCHES HONORING THE GENERATIONS

Our chuppah is being held by honored members of the ALEPH community, representing the generations of rabbis who came before us, and the movement they built to welcome us into as colleagues. They are accompanied by some of our beloved children, representing the next generation, who we will build for and with in our lifetimes.

Thank you Victor Arango for photographing and Jeff Greenstein for videographing and streaming today's ceremony. Thank you Christa Harmon for your work creating this beautiful program. Thank you Rabbi Shulamit Thiede and Charlotte Miller for the chuppah.

Please join us for a celebratory celebration after this ordination ceremony!

ORDINATION PROGRAMS CORE FACULTY:

Charles Silverstein, Ph.D.

Interim Dean

Hazzan Diana Brewer

Dean of Students

Rabbi Natan Margalit, Ph.D.

Dean of Faculty

Rabbi Eva Sax-Bolder and Rabbi Phyllis Ocean Berman

Hashpa'ah Supervisors

Hazzan Abbe Lyons

Interim Director, Cantorial Program

Music Supervisor

Rabbi/Rabbinic Pastor Sherril Gilbert

Co-Director of Rabbinic Pastor Program

Rabbinic Pastor Director of Study

Rabbinic Pastor Carl Viniar

Co-Director of Rabbinic Pastor Program

Rabbinic Pastor Director of Study

Rabbi Shawn Zevit

Hashpa'ah Training Program Director

Rabbi David Curiel

Hashpa'ah Training Program Associate Director

Rabbi Elliot Ginsburg, Ph.D.

Beloved Land: Israel and Palestine Program Director

and Rabbinic Director of Studies

Rabbi Leila Gal Berner, Ph.D.

Rabbinic Director of Studies

Chair of Bible & History Departments

Rabbi Aubrey Glazer, Ph.D.

Chair of Jewish Thought Department

Rabbi Fern Feldman

Hebrew Supervisor

ADDITIONAL RABBINIC DIRECTORS OF STUDY:

Rabbi Caryn Aviv, Ph.D.

Rabbi Shir Meira Feit

Rabbi Heather Paul

Rabbi Amy Grossblatt Pessah

PROCESSIONAL

Et Mi Eshlach, melody by Rabbi Kolby Morris-Dahary

אֶת־מִי אֶשְׁלַח

וּמִי יֵלֶךְ־לְנוּ

וְאָמַר, הִנְנִי שְׁלַחְנִי

(Isaiah 6:8)

צָבֹת שְׁלוֹם וּמְנוּחָה

וְעֵמָה מְלֹאכִים

בְּאֵי מְלָכָה בְּאֵי כְּלָה

שְׁלוֹם עֲלֵיכֶם, מְלֹאכֵי הַשְּׁלוֹם

(from Shabbat HaMalkah by Haim Nachman Bialik)

עֲבָדוּ אֶת יְהוָה, יְהוָה בְּשִׂמְחָה

(Tehillim 100:2)

Et mi eshlach

Umi yelch lanu

Va'omar hineini sh'lacheini

Tz'vat shalom, shalom um'nuchah

V'imah malachim

Bo'i malkah, bo'i kallah

Shalom aleichem malachei hashareit

Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?

Then I said: 'Here I am; send me!'

A cohort of peace and of serenity; and angels with her.

Come Goddess! Come Sacred Queen!

And may peace be upon you, surrounded by angels of peace

Dance in Divine Spirit! And commit in Joy!

Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?

Then I said: 'Here I am; send me!'

WELCOME

Charles Silverstein, Ph.D., Interim Dean

RITUAL OFFERINGS BY THE SMICHA CLASS OF 2025

Igal Harmelin:

The Ancient Practice of the Early Chasidim - Just Be

Barukh Solomon: Gal Eynai

גל-עיני ואביטה נפלאות מתורתך:

Gal einai v'abitah nifla'ot miToratecha

Unveil my eyes, and let me behold wonders from Your Torah

Zvika Krieger:

Aish Zarah: The Imperative of Spiritual Innovation
& Honoring of Rabbi Burt Jacobson z"l

Josh Jeffreys, Aaron Rotenberg, Lorin Troderman:

Sefer Yetzira's Three Mothers: An Earth Based Offering

Nira Scheer:

Drash - One Square Foot

Rivkah Coburn & Dorith Hodayah Steinberg:

Together We Answer the Call: An Embodied Offering
joined by Rabbi Shefa Gold chanting

עברו עברו בשערים פנו דרך העם

Ivru, ivru b'she'arim panu derekh ha'am

Go through, go through the gates. Clear the way for the people. (Isaiah 62:10)

Barukh Solomon:

Niggun

Elizheva Hurvich:

Healing Our Ancestral Lineages

LINEAGE

Rabbi Leila Gal Berner, Ph.D. and Rabbi Elliot Ginsburg, Ph.D.

INVOCATION

Rabbi Marcia Prager

CONFERRING OF RABBINIC PASTOR SMICHA

Rabbi/Rabbinic Pastor Sherril Gilbert & Rabbinic Pastor Carl Viniar

HONORING HAZZAN JACK KESSLER (Z"l)

Hazzan Diana Brewer & Hazzan Abbe Lyons

CONFERRING OF CANTORIAL SMICHA

Hazzan Abbe Lyons

CONFERRING OF RABBINIC SMICHA

Rabbi Elliot Ginsburg, Ph.D.

BIRKAT KOHANIM

Hazzan Diana Brewer

SHEHECHEYANU

Hazzan Barukh Solomon

KOL SHOFAR

The shofar is an instrument as well as a channel that lets the air, water and fire of our breath through. As we become ordained, we also become channels and instruments to let the spirit, emotions and soul of our people flow through us in our service.

RECESSIONAL

Od Yishama melody by Joey Weisenberg and the Hadar Ensemble

“Voices of Joy” (Wedding Blessings)

עוד ישמע בערי יהודה

ובחצות ירושלים

קול ששון וקול שמחה

קול חתן וקול כלה

קול אהוב וקול רעה

Od yishama b'arei Yehudah

Uv'chutzot Yerushalayim

Kol sasson v'kol simcha

Kol chatan v'kol kallah

Kol ahuv v'kol rei'ah

Yet again there shall be heard in the cities of Judah,
and in the streets of Jerusalem.



RIVKAH COBURN

As a child there was a sense of light which guided me. I did not have words to describe it, except that the light was filled with love, possibility, and joy. Now I recognize that Light as the Divine Presence who lived in me and guided me even when I didn't consciously know what it was. In Hebrew school I loved prayers. I have very fond memories of going to *shul* with my father and listening to the prayers while I braided the *tzitzit* of his *tallis*. Those fine silky strands of thread which I held represented strong ties to my ancestral lineage and were weaving the way for something much bigger than I could ever imagine.

In Reb Zalman's story, "A Midwife for Souls", Reb Zalman names the soul calling that a girl named Shulamit had deep inside her, but could not identify. So too, exactly 30 years ago, R. Linda Potemken named the soul yearning that I didn't

even know I had which set me on a path of learning, healing, and service towards becoming a rabbi.

As a young adult I had a spiritual awakening at a yoga ashram in the Catskill mountains that led me to Reb Zalman and the mystical spirituality that Jewish Renewal offered. I began to study Jewish meditation with Shoshana and R. David Cooper z"l and R. Jeff Roth. I studied at the Jewish Renewal Life Center in Philadelphia with Reb Marcia, R. Arthur Waskow, R. Julie Greenberg, R. Shawn Zevit, and R. Shefa Gold.

After moving to Portland, OR the threads of light continued to weave together as Reb Aryeh Hirschfield z"l became my *rebbe*. I began to explore embodied Jewish practice through teaching what I called "Tree of Life Yoga." It was during that time that Reb Aryeh tasked me with developing and leading embodied morning blessings that he had begun with P'nai Or of Portland. It was in Reb Aryeh's *siddur* that I first found R. Burt Jacobsen's z"l, interpretive translation of *V'ahavta*: "Make your life into a voice of God both in your stillness and in your movement." These became words to live by.

After Reb Aryeh's untimely death I studied with R. David and *Maggidah* Devorah Zaslow, receiving *smicha* as a Jewish storyteller and service leader. In 2014, the week that Reb Zalman died, I met R. Diane Elliot, who became my teacher, mentor, and friend as she opened up a world of embodied Jewish practice that enlivened my soul calling. My studies with R. Diane led the way to the AOP's *Hashpa'ah* program, DLTI, and the Rabbinic Ordination program. Deep gratitude to everyone I have mentioned, as well as my soul guide, R. Hanna Tiferet Siegel, R. Natan Margalit and R. Nadya and R. Victor Gross, and many other teachers.

Huge gratitude to my beloved Alan, sisters Jennifer and Amy, my friends, soul sisters, and communities. You all continue to be the *tzitzit* of light and love that connects me to our Jewish tradition in which I may "*Ivdu et HaShem b'simcha*," "Serve the Holy One with joy."



IGAL HARMELIN

As a 12th grader in a secular school in Tel Aviv, I fell in love, and it changed my life. The love was not stirred by another person but by an unlikely source: *Sefer Tehillim* (The Book of Psalms).

Reading the Psalms was not my choice: it was a required part of that year's curriculum. And yet, in no time, the poetry got under my skin. I told my friends that I felt jealous of King David, the Psalm's purported author, whose love for, and intimacy with, God made my passionate love for my girlfriend seem trivial.

One could say that the fifty-plus years that have passed since then were spent chasing that love. Whether in Hindu Ashrams or with new-age gurus; whether studying the Qur'an or giving talks on the Tao Te Ching; whether teaching meditation in Hebrew, English, French or Russian—the basic motivation has

always been the aspiration to unite with the Beloved. In recent years, this has led me to deepen my passion for Judaism as well as to seek training in mystical healing with inspiring teachers. Foremost among them is Thomas Hübl, whose teachings on healing collective trauma has been core to my explorations.

Throughout these years, Hassidic teachings held a special place in my heart. This was particularly true of the teachings of Rabbi Nachman of Breslav, whose writings I was exposed to as an IDF soldier, when he was still largely unknown (early 70's). I also found inspiration in whatever teachings I gleaned from the Zohar. It was natural, therefore, that as my relationship with, and commitment to, Judaism deepened, I delved more deeply into its mystical teachings, helped by the insights of such teachers as Rabbis Zalman Schachter-Shalomi and Arthur Green. Rabbi Lisa Goldstein, my dear wife, has also been a great inspiration.

ALEPH Ordination Program was a natural choice for my rabbinical training, because of its strong mystical/Hassidic emphasis, the commitment to deep ecumenism, and its spirit of innovation and openness. Learning from wonderful teachers, such as Reb Marcia Prager, Reb Elliot Ginsburg, and many others, has enriched my Jewish experience and awareness.

I hope to combine my passion and love for Judaism with the training that I received in healing collective trauma to be a source of healing in the Jewish world.



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THE 2025 MUSMACHIMOT!



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ELIZHEVA HURVICH

Reb Zusya of Hanipol taught, “when I pass from this world, I will not be asked at the heavenly gates, Why were you not Moses? They will ask me, ‘why were you not Zusya?’”

When I was a child I wondered if a person’s life was measured by the number of breaths one took or the number of words one spoke? As a girl whose mother died when I was a baby, these were natural questions— along with why are we alive? And what will I do with my “one precious life?” My dad raised me in a house in the Redwoods with exposure to eclectic Jewish traditions, including the nascent Congregation Kol Shofar, Shabbos Shul, the Rock n’ Roll Rabbis, Joseph and Nathan Segal, and my extended family in the Deep South, Birmingham, Knoxville, Atlanta.

Judaism has been a connective and generative through-line in my life. In college I joined my first Jewish women’s Rosh Hodesh group, aligning myself with the rhythms of the moon and to cycles of the Jewish calendar. After college, following a call to explore Judaism more deeply, I moved to Mt. Airy in Philadelphia, home to the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, P’nai Or, the Shalom Center and Rabbi Zalman Schacter-Shalomi (z”l, may we remember him and his blessings.)

Walking into Rabbi Marcia Prager’s class on the “Mystical Alef Bet,” she was teaching on the 12th letter, the Lamed, whose shape is like lightning, or the number 7, with a vertical line reaching up. The name of this letter comes from the Hebrew root which also means “to teach” and “to learn,” as well as academy and student. I saw, as if a physical vision, a giant letter lamed, reaching up to heaven, integrating the information horizontally, and passing it down to the next lamed below. The room was filled with chains of lameds— and I felt myself in that chain of transmissions!

I became a Jewish teacher and have had the honor of opening the heart- and mind-gates of hundreds of students. Serving as Rosh, educational head of Kehilla Community Synagogue in Piedmont, CA for a decade, my proudest gift was to partner with Rabbis David Cooper, Sandra Razieli and Burt Jacobson z”l to develop a YOM SHALOM / YOM SALAAM celebration, marking the shared cultures of Palestinians and Jews in the Middle East.

When training to officiate weddings with my friend and teacher Rachel Brodie, I found a name for my spiritual leadership, “Lev Shomeah,” a listening heart. It is my highest goal in my spiritual leadership to listen and to help open doors to seekers. When I die, many years from now, I hope that part of my legacy will be that people are left with a glowing feeling that I helped to connect people in the best possible ways.

When I turned 50 I did two audacious things: I applied to rabbinical school and I bought a pair of roller skates. After years that have stretched and grown me, I stand ready to receive this ordination. I thank the many who have been on this journey with me—teachers, students, and friends. Thank you for your companionship and love!



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JOSHUA JEFFREYS

וַיִּקְרַן יַעֲקֹב מִשְׁנָתוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אֶכֶל יֵשׁ הַהוּא בְּמָקוֹם הַזֶּה וְאֲנֹכִי לֹא יָדַעְתִּי:

Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, “Surely the Divine is present in this place, and I... I did not know it!” – Genesis 28:16

From my childhood in New Jersey, Jewish tradition has formed the foundation of my relationship to the world. My love for Judaism was fostered by my community, my teachers, and my family – most especially my parents. By my Bar Mitzvah, I began sharing a dream of becoming a rabbi. Ever since, I have served the Jewish community in some professional or volunteer capacity.

In 2013, I earned my degree in Jewish Studies from Rutgers University and moved to Richmond, VA. Before joining the University of Richmond in 2015 (where I earned an MBA in 2019), I worked with Jewish organizations as an educator, community builder, and prayer leader. But my life changed in 2016 when I became the part-time interim Jewish Life Advisor for UR.

For two years in the role, I helped the Jewish community and campus overall navigate the 2016 election, the hatred and heartache of the Unite the Right rally nearby in Charlottesville, and – shortly after becoming the Jewish Chaplain and Director of Religious Life in 2018 – the devastation of the Pittsburgh Synagogue shooting. I sensed a renewed longing to be a rabbi, recognizing we needed holistic spiritual leadership to help heal a deeply fractured society. After a chance encounter with ALEPH and Jewish Renewal, I am blessed to continue my work with the expanded mind-, skill-, and heart-set of a Renewal Rabbi.

Thank you to my Director of Studies Rabbi Leila Gal Berner, Rabbi Elliot Ginsburg, Rabbi Natan Margalit, Rabbi Marcia Prager, Rabbi Oren Steinitz, Rabbi Zelig Golden, my Earth-Based Judaism cohort and teachers, and my many *chevrotot*. They have played an outsized role in shaping me and my relationship to Divinity. R’ Elliot and R’ Leila, with Dr. Kamar Kamionkowski and Rav Aubrey Glazer, also deserve tremendous credit for guiding me through a deeply enriching capstone process.

My University of Richmond Chaplaincy colleagues and friends, Hillel peers (particularly the Shalom Hartman Institute Campus Professionals Cohort), and Temple Beth El community have all helped shape my emerging rabbinate, and I’m grateful for my rabbis Mark Novak and Michael Knopf for their personal guidance and mentorship.

Finally, this moment is not possible without the love, patience, sacrifices, and care of my loved ones: Mom and Dad, Stef, Karen and Marc (z”l), Lori, Dana, Brian, MJ, Ilana, and especially my wife, Amy. I am blessed to spend my life with her as true partners, and grow together as parents to the gift that is our son, Marc. They both inspire me to be my best self and to embody the best of what ALEPH, Renewal Judaism, and Jewish tradition has taught me.



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ZVIKA KRIEGER

Zvika Krieger is the Spiritual Leader of Chochmat HaLev, a progressive spiritual community in Berkeley, CA for embodied prayer and mindfulness, heart-centered connections, and mystical experiences. He is co-founder of Shevet: Jewish Mindfulness Collective and has served in board and leadership positions for Sukkat Shalom/Milk+Honey camp at Burning Man, Jewish Studio Project, DC Minyan, and other organizations dedicated to nourishing the mind, body, and soul.

Zvika has worked on mitigating some of the most damaging impacts of new technologies on individuals and society as Facebook/Meta’s first-ever Director of Responsible Innovation, creating and leading the World Economic Forum’s Center for the Fourth Industrial Revolution, as the US Department of State’s first-ever “Ambassador to Silicon Valley,” and as a Senior Strategist in the Office of the

Secretary of Defense. He has taught courses on design, technology, and social impact at Stanford, UC Berkeley, and the Rhode Island School of Design.

Zvika previously served as Senior Vice President of the Center for Middle East Peace, an editor and writer at *The Atlantic* and *The New Republic*, and was *Newsweek’s* Middle East correspondent, based in Egypt and Lebanon and covering most of the Arab world.

He has a BA from Yale University and studied at Yeshivat Shaarei Mevaseret Zion and the American University in Cairo. He is a certified Shadow Work facilitator and Design Thinking facilitator, certified as “God” with “Talk to God”, trained as an ecstatic dance DJ by Embodied Sound, and received rabbinical ordination in the Hassidic lineage. Originally from Los Angeles, Zvika loves to surf, dance, rock climb, and sing karaoke occasionally on-key. He lives in Berkeley with his ten-year-old son.

Learn more about Zvika at www.zvikakrieger.com and follow him on Instagram at [@zkrieger](https://www.instagram.com/zkrieger).



AARON ROTENBERG

I was born and raised in Thornhill, Ontario the suburbs of Toronto, where I went through the Jewish Day School system. It was only in stepping out of the system and attending public school in grade 12 that I sought out and found Jewish life and community that spoke to my soul.

I graduated from the Jewish Theological Seminary and Columbia University where I studied Bible, Psychology and Creative Writing. It was there, living in JTS dorms with people of different religious backgrounds, finding their way together and learning about the academic study of Judaism that I felt the expanded possibilities of ways that Judaism could be meaningful to my own life.

I then moved to Israel/Palestine for 2.5 years, studying at Midreshet Ein Prat, Tel Aviv University and learning about the political situation by spending time with Palestinians in the West Bank. In Jerusalem, I was exposed to mindfulness practice in a Jewish frame and the close knit neighborhood community in Nachlaot, amidst other seekers, with frequent living room davening, collective support and supportive spiritual and political exploration.

I returned to Toronto, to pursue an MFA in film production and be close to family. Back in Toronto, I sought to be part of building a community that had the inspiring elements of Jewish community I had found in my travels.

I co-founded The Orchard, an independent, intentional Jewish home that was the site of community events, home life and many havdallahs.

I also got involved with international interfaith work through the International Conference of Christians and Jews, organizing yearly conferences and local interfaith efforts.

I stepped more fully into Jewish Leadership as the Spiritual Leader of Annex Shul, a downtown-based community mainly serving folks in their 20s and 30s. Being at Annex Shul, I sought further support and guidance as I began leading community and started rabbinical training at the AOP.

In the summers since 2014 I have worked as an educator with Heart to Heart, a camp program that brings together Jewish and Palestinian teenagers together for a month of shared society-building and encounter in Canada.

I continue to be involved in various positions of leadership while pursuing rabbinic ordination, working with B Mitzvah students, couples and families in lifecycle moments. I was part of the Earth-Based Judaism Cohort at ALEPH, which helped me find nourishment in the connections between Jewish practice and the earth. I enjoy leading occasional photography workshops.

Recently, I have been part of starting Renewal Shabbat services in Toronto, to bring learning from the AOP and DLTI to people in Toronto eager for renewed and engaged spiritual life.

I live in a shared home with friends and family including my spouse, Jenny.



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NIRA SCHEER

מִן־יְהוָה מִצָּרָה קָרָא אֶת־יְהוָה עֲנֵנִי בְּמִצְחָבִי יְהוָה:

In distress I called out to the LORD; the Lord answered me and brought me relief. — Palm 118:5

In a winding path with many switchbacks, I started dreaming of becoming a congregational rabbi in 2002.

Earning my Masters from Gratz College in Jewish Studies with a thesis in Gay and Lesbian Lifecycle Liturgy, I was awarded the graduation prize in Jewish Thought. At Gratz, I attended a class in Multiple Perspectives in Jewish Thought from Rabbi Victor Gross introducing me to Jewish Renewal. When I applied to the ALEPH Ordination Program in 2009, Reb Victor became my Director of

Studies.

In 2012, at Atlanta’s Congregation Bet Haverim, I worked as the Finesilver Memorial Rabbinic Intern for two years. There, I led services, provided pastoral care, officiated lifecycles and taught various groups of people to leyn Torah.

When I entered the ALEPH Ordination Program, I was focused on becoming a rabbi and pursued that intensely. One of the last requirements I had left was Clinical Pastoral Education, which I very much resisted. I entered the CPE program at Children’s Hospital of Atlanta and pretty much instantly fell in love with chaplaincy. So much so, I took 6 units! I found my true calling and changed my focus to becoming a chaplain.

We went from three to five children in 2014 and that many children have a way of commanding your full attention. I chose to focus on family and stepped out of the AOP. But, children grow up and need us a tad less. So, in 2023, I was able to return to the program and knock out my last few classes needed to become ordained as a Rabbinic Pastor.

Thank you to all of my teachers throughout the years. It is your wisdom that guides me.

Thank you to Reb Victor, who as my Director of Studies for my rabbinic years, helped me navigate through the twists and turns of our program. He put up with me with a keen sense of humor and an expansive heart.

Thank you to Reb Shulamit, my mashpia through it all. When you’re Reb Shulamit’s, she is there for you always.

Thank you to Rabbi Joshua Lesser who mentored me on this path, providing teaching, directing, pastoral counseling spiritual direction, and friendship.

And, many thanks go to Jess and my kids who worked and sacrificed for years to help me fulfill my dream.



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THE 2025 MUSMACHIMOT!



BARUKH SOLOMON

I was once an ambitious young mathematician who happened to love playing guitar. Until my late 30’s, I would have told you I couldn’t sing.

Then I stumbled into Torah-leyning, and when my voice gave sonic shape to Torah, I felt like I had discovered a long-lost twin brother.

Leyning led to traditional service leading, and then to leading renewal services with voice and guitar both. I grew fascinated with the art of creating sacred space. For many years, I strove on my own — and with my talented *beskert*, Sue Swartz — trying to make myself a *sulam* — a ladder — that could lift my community through music and prayer.

After many years — at the end of 2019 — I retired from my professorship.

Within weeks, out of the blue, a friend introduced me to the AOP through Hazzan Jack Kessler of blessed memory, which...hmmm...seemed like it might offer me the chance to rise higher as a musician, as a *shaliach*, and maybe even as a human being.

Vayehi kein – and so it did.

The amazing people in this program — students and faculty — showed me depths of tradition and heights of being I didn’t even know existed. Without expecting it, I had joined a host of holy creatures who daily don the yoke of heaven and give each other loving permission to sanctify our Creator — with gentle spirit, with clear language, and with holy melody.

I overflow with gratitude to the Holy Blessed One for the health, time, and resources — internal, external, material, and human — that have ferried me to this radically amazing moment. I’m especially grateful for the guides and teachers I’ve encountered along the way:

My parents who raised me with loving care and Jewish pride.

My treasured daughters Naima, Lonica, and Leah, who have enriched my life beyond measure.

Rabbi Mira Wasserman, who first noticed and nurtured a *hazzan* hiding inside a mathematician.

My Bloomington *kehilla* for accepting my imperfect offerings with love and support these many years.

My late, revered mentor, Hazzan Jack Kessler z”l, who shared his deep mastery of *hazzanut* with such astounding skill, warmth, generosity, and humor.

Leon Olenick for dragging me to Jack’s door and knocking on it for me.

My spiritual director Lavey Derby for his steady, perceptive, and knowing guidance.

My voice teacher, Peter Volpe, for helping me get (and give) more from my rickety instrument.

Rabbi Marcia Prager, my rebbe, whose deep teaching and amazing example inspire me profoundly.

And...Sue, who has nourished me with her love for almost 30 years now.



SEND A BLESSING TO
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DORITH HODAYAH STEINBERG

I grew up in a typically secular Israeli family. We resented Judaism as we experienced it practiced in Israel with the infringement of Jewish Orthodox laws on the lives of secular Israelis.

After my compulsory army service I studied Computer Sciences and moved to Southern California where I worked for two years as a programmer. Life/God/The Mystery very gently opened doors to aspects of reality that can not be measured and are not linear. The work of psychologist Carl Rogers opened the doors to inner landscapes and group work. I spent two months at Esalen, a cutting-edge New Age community in Big Sur, California, where I encountered spirituality, yoga, massage therapy, veganism, Gestalt psychology and more. I became conscious of my spiritual yearnings.

Years later, while deeply involved with Living In Process work, I realized how important feelings are and got more in touch with my own. I did 12-Step work, lived in an intentional, spiritual community, and experienced Native American spirituality and culture. When I wanted to delve deeper into Native American wisdom I was told I should first study my own tradition, however I did not believe that Judaism had anything meaningful to offer me.

Yet The Mystery continued to guide me in unexpected ways. I joined Congregation Shaarei Shamayim (CSS) in Madison, WI, mostly to have a Jewish community with which to celebrate holidays. With CSS's support and a friend's encouragement I went to an ALEPH summer Kallah. I chose a class with Reb Marcia Prager since I'd had a good experience with her when she and Hazzan Jack Kessler, of blessed memory led a *shabbaton* for CSS. To my surprise the class was about leading services. I loved the class and felt drawn to take DLTI, a two-year prayer leadership program. I followed this call not understanding why I was doing it. During DLTI, I deeply connected with my Jewish roots and the seed of the possibility of rabbinic training was planted.

The dancer in me was unearthed when I did several workshops with Gabrielle Roth. Dancing is one of the main ways I access The Mystery. Gratitude to Rabbi Diane Elliot's Embodying Spirit En-spirited Body program for giving me a Jewish context in which to experience the Divine through dance.

Now here I am, with an overflowing heart, getting ordained more than 10 years after cautiously dipping into Jewish ritual life!

At CSS I serve on the Ritual Committee, lead some services and, and our Torah Study havurah. We share deeply and our experience is always unexpected and rich. A journey into the unknown, with trusted friends, with guidance from generations of Jewish wisdom, sprinkled with Divine dust. As is written in שיר השירים/Song of Songs: "הַשְׂמִיעֵנִי הַקְּרִיבִים מִקְּשֵׁיבִים לְקוֹלְךָ / Friends are listening to you, let me hear your voice."

I am grateful to The Mystery for guidance, love, and support. I am grateful to my family and friends, to Congregation Shaarei Shamayim community, the ALEPH community - teachers, students and staff, and to my Madison dance community. You walked with me through many challenges and joys. I could not have done it without you. Thank you.



LORIN TRODERMAN

Lorin is a recent graduate of the Earth-Based Judaism Program at ALEPH and has been the spiritual leader of Adas Yeshuron Synagogue in Rockland, Maine, since August 2023. His rabbinical school studies also included interfaith families' Jewish engagement.

Lorin's undergraduate degree is from Babson College and he earned a graduate degree in education from Australia's LaTrobe University and an MBA focusing on sustainability from Presidio School of Management. Before coming to Adas Yeshuron Lorin served, in Portland, Maine, as a rabbinic intern at Temple Beth El, the director of the University of Southern Maine Hillel and the Jewish chaplain at Maine Medical Center.

He lives with his partner Sussi in Camden, Maine, and feels blessed to be part of the wonderful midcoast Maine Jewish community. Lorin has two adult sons: the elder, Dylan, lives in Seattle and the younger, Max, resides in Boulder. He loves to play guitar, walk in the Camden Hills and bask in the miraculous beauty of the Wabanaki Dawmland.

For Lorin, the Jewish community is a large, many faceted family that stretches from enduring day school friendships, to memories of Kibbutz Ramat Hashofet, situated between Haifa and Nazareth, to the shores of the Australian capital Melbourne, to both coasts of the US where Lorin has directed Hillels (Santa Cruz and Southern Maine). These are places where he has made his home and celebrated being Jewish with family, friends, activists, congregants and community.

"Wherever I go, I feel present as a part of *Klal Yisrael*, the Jewish people. Sinai continues to make a claim on me to learn and teach about our heritage and walk humbly with those who also strive to speak this language," says Lorin. "I am drawn to cultivating practices that enhance my own and others' relationship with YHVH. Each day I seek a firmer grasp of how Judaism's unique dimensions can uplift people and places of all kinds."

This devotion to enhancing the lives of Jews, their neighbors and their varied communities is ingrained throughout Lorin's life. He strives to combine in the fabric of our lives the warp of American pluralistic and democratic idealism with the weft of Jewish Renewal's hope, heart and passion.



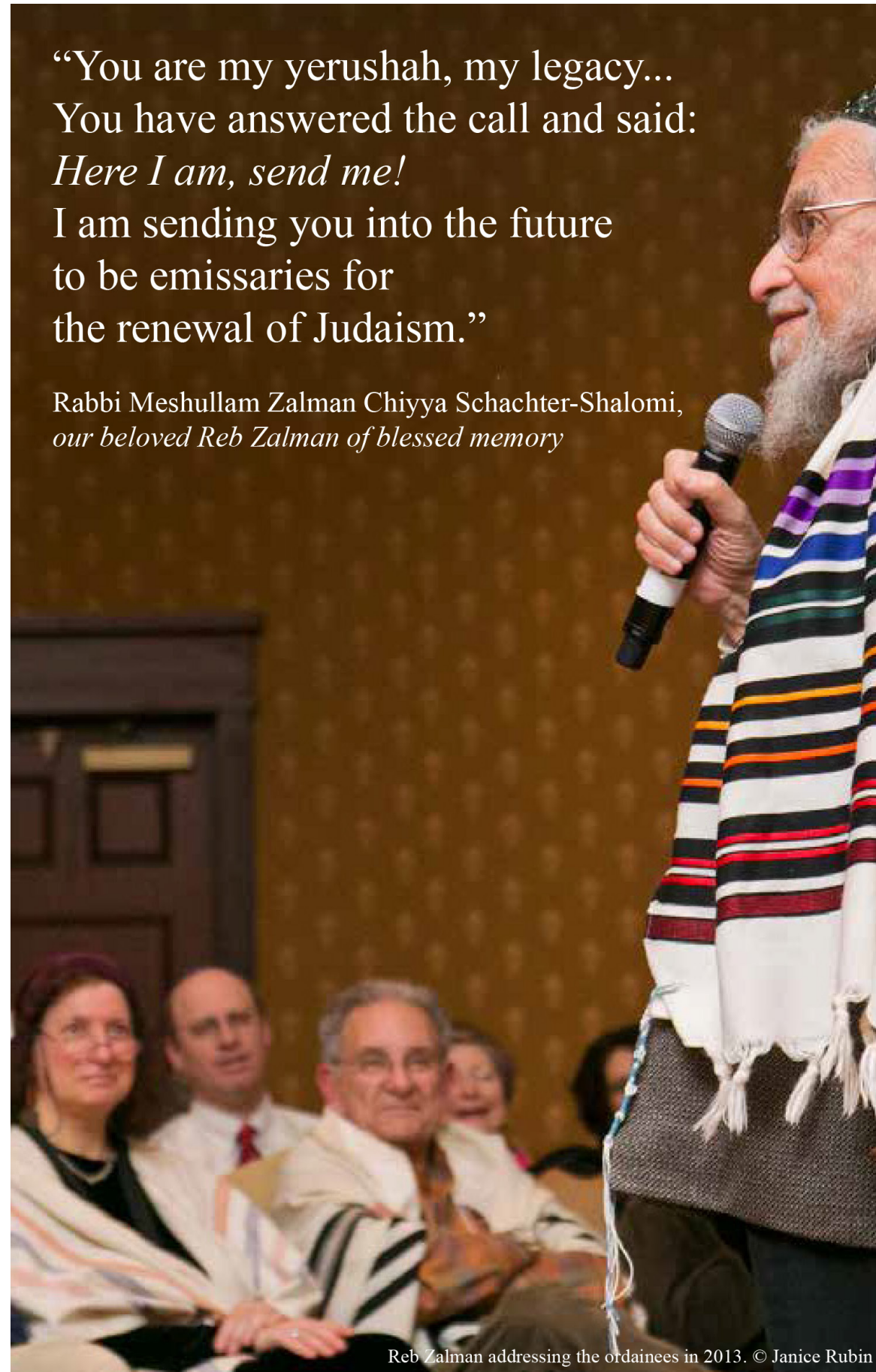
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“You are my yerushah, my legacy...
You have answered the call and said:
Here I am, send me!
I am sending you into the future
to be emissaries for
the renewal of Judaism.”

Rabbi Meshullam Zalman Chiyva Schachter-Shalomi,
our beloved Reb Zalman of blessed memory



Reb Zalman addressing the ordainees in 2013. © Janice Rubin



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