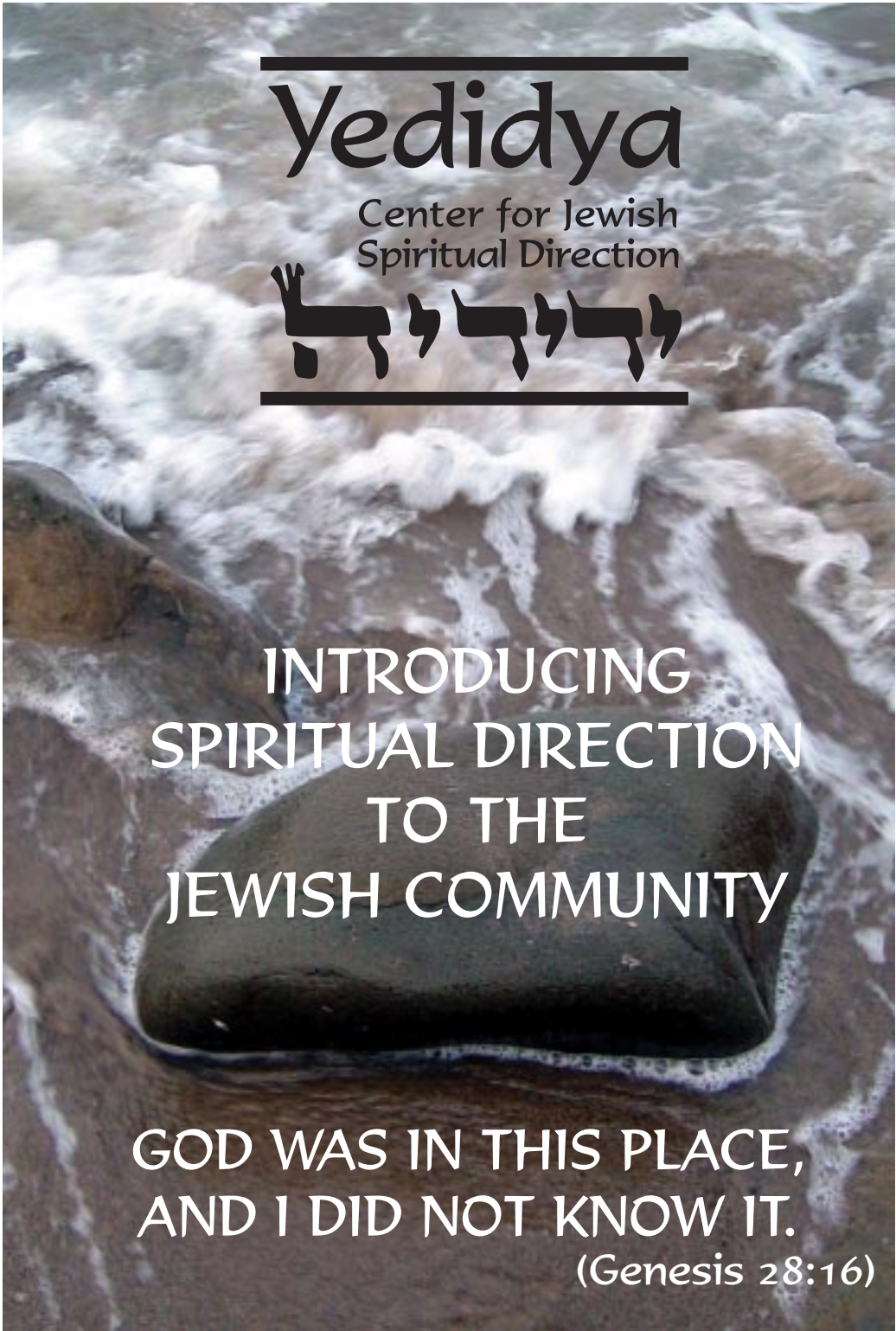


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567 Canyon Road
Emerald Hills, CA 94062



Yedidya
Center for Jewish
Spiritual Direction
יהוה אלהינו יהוה אלהינו

INTRODUCING
SPIRITUAL DIRECTION
TO THE
JEWISH COMMUNITY

GOD WAS IN THIS PLACE,
AND I DID NOT KNOW IT.
(Genesis 28:16)

What is Jewish Spiritual Direction?

Spiritual Direction is a unique process for exploring divine presence in one's life. In relationship with a spiritual companion, or "director," individuals recognize their unfolding experience of God's presence in daily life, seeking to deepen their relationship with the Holy. This practice is a potent tool for helping individuals notice the sacred dimension that underlies all life, open themselves to experiences of oneness, and recognize the ways in which they may be guided or accompanied along their life journey.

Spiritual direction also provides a relationship of safety and trust in which one may confront pain, frustration, and despair or wrestle with a sense of God's absence. In these conversations, it is sometimes possible to recognize moments when, like our ancestor Jacob, one has awakened from slumber to discover that the Holy One has entered one's life in unexpected ways.

"When you want to seclude yourself for private meditation, have a companion with you . . . Two people should be in the room; each one communing with the blessed Creator."

— Ba'al Shem Tov (Tzava'at HaRivash #63)

Yedidya's Mission

Yedidya is dedicated to the introduction of Jewish Spiritual Direction to the North American Jewish community and to the thoughtful development of this emerging new field. Our work includes:

- Public education programs to familiarize the Jewish community with the practice of Spiritual Direction and its potential benefits for Jewish life
- The Morei Derekh Training Program in Jewish Spiritual Direction, based on Jewish text, practice, and participation in spiritual community
- Forums for ongoing professional development and creative interchange among Jewish Spiritual Directors

We Work With...

- Congregations
- Seminaries and Institutions of Adult Learning
- Professional Associations of Rabbis, Cantors and Jewish Educators
- Healing Centers and Chaplaincy Programs
- JCCs and Jewish Family Service agencies
- Hillels

Why is Spiritual Direction Important for the Jewish Community?

Responding powerfully to the deep spiritual hunger felt by so many in our time, Jewish Spiritual Direction helps Jews explore their spiritual longings, reflect on their experiences of the sacred, and examine their spiritual lives within the context of Jewish prayer, practice, and community.



This new discipline is contributing to the spiritual transformation of Jewish life:

- By offering to unaffiliated Jews a way to place their own individual spiritual exploration within the context of Jewish text, ritual, and community.
- By helping already committed Jews deepen their experience of the holy that lies at the core of Jewish prayer and ritual.
- By providing rabbis, cantors, educators and community leaders nourishment and guidance in their own spiritual lives, enabling them to better serve others.
- By assisting Jewish institutions in the transformative work of bringing the divine back to the center of Jewish life.

[Meeting regularly with a spiritual director] "has helped me to be a more focused teacher, a more empathetic counselor, and a more committed community activist. Perhaps even more important, it has helped me to be more present to my family." - Rabbi Laura Geller

The impact [of the Spiritual Direction program] on the culture of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College was immediate and striking. With 75 percent of our students participating voluntarily . . . , discussions in academic seminars and in the halls suddenly were focused on the inspiring and sacred. People had words to describe experiences that are awkward to articulate in the larger secular culture. Moreover . . . the idiom of traditional ritual and prayer now resonates more intensely. – Rabbi Jacob Staub

WHAT CAN YEDIDYA OFFER TO YOUR COMMUNITY?

We Can Help You to

- introduce Jewish Spiritual Direction to your membership or constituency
- respond to the spiritual yearnings of your members
- present Jewish texts and rituals as a compelling spiritual path
- provide spiritual leadership for your community
- create an on-site program of individual or group spiritual direction
- train Jewish spiritual directors to serve your community
- create a follow-up plan to sustain the work over time in ways suited to your community

Yedidya also offers:

- Information and articles about Spiritual Direction through our website
- A referral system to help individuals locate Jewish Spiritual Directors
- The Morei Derekh Jewish Spiritual Direction Training Program - a 2-year, retreat-based, distance learning program for those seeking to become Jewish Spiritual Directors
- Advanced training opportunities for Jewish Spiritual Directors

YEDIDYA'S PUBLIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Our program offerings include lectures, workshops, retreats, and scholar-in-residence programs for synagogues, associations of rabbis, cantors and Jewish educators, seminaries, and Jewish community agencies that wish to introduce their constituencies to Spiritual Direction.

All programs are fashioned to best meet the needs of your community, combining teaching, discussion, text study and experiential learning.

SAMPLE TOPICS INCLUDE:

God Was in this Place and I Did Not Know It: Spiritual Direction for Jews

Melo Kol Ha'aretz Kevodo: Finding God in Daily Life

Deepening Your Spiritual Journey: Sacred Texts and Practices for the Jewish Soul

Listening for God: Listening as the Basis for Tikkun Olam

Hearing God's Voice in Torah: Talmud Torah as a Spiritual Path

Prayer: From the Book and from the Heart

Wherever We Let God In: An Introduction to Jewish Contemplative Prayer

Spiritual Autobiography: Writing Our Way Toward God

Spiritual Direction as a Tool for Times of Loss and Change

Yedidya's Spiritual Directors-in-Training talk about the impact of Jewish Spiritual Direction:

"Many modern Jews are uncomfortable or unfamiliar with their own personal relationship with God. Jewish Spiritual Direction affords the Jewish seeker an opportunity to explore that relationship in a safe, loving and non-threatening environment. In my own Spiritual Direction, I felt empowered to develop a connection with God in my own way."

"Spiritual Direction is a powerful modality for healing, nourishing and maturing the relationship with God. I can't imagine a more important discipline for the modern rabbi in any denomination."



"So many Jews think of Judaism as a culture, or something to do on Sabbath and holidays. Jewish Spiritual Direction makes Judaism a purposeful life-journey guided by ongoing conversation with a personal God."

"This work has helped me deepen my ability to listen to another with an open heart and without a judging mind, to listen beyond the words, to witness the other in their verbal soul searching."

The Yedidya Faculty



Rabbi Amy Eilberg – co-director, is the first woman ordained as a Conservative rabbi. Nationally known as a leader of the Jewish healing movement, she lectures and writes on issues of Jewish spirituality, healing, and spiritual direction. She trained in spiritual direction at the Shalem Institute and received training in supervising directors at the Mercy Center.



Dr. Linda Thal - co-director, is a Jewish educator who helped pioneer the early work in synagogue transformation. She teaches at Makom, the Center for Contemplative Judaism at the JCC in Manhattan and serves as a consultant to the Central Conference of American Rabbis' Committee on Rabbinic Spirituality. Her doctoral dissertation represents the major scholarly work done on Jewish spiritual direction to date. She trained in spiritual direction at Fordham University and received training in supervising directors at the Mercy Center.



Anne Brener - is a psychotherapist with Masters degrees in social work, communal service, and broadcast communications. She is the author of *Mourning and Mitzvah* and numerous articles on pastoral counseling. She is studying for rabbinic ordination at Hebrew Union College and teaches at The Academy for Jewish Religion in Los Angeles. She trained in spiritual direction at Centerpoint/Stillpoint: Center for Christian Spirituality and received training in supervising directors at the Mercy Center.



Alan Morinis - was a Rhodes Scholar and earned his doctorate in social anthropology at Oxford University. Following careers in academia and film-making, Alan turned his attention to the Jewish spiritual and ethical tradition of Mussar. He teaches and lectures widely and directs a distance-learning program in Mussar. His most recent book is *Climbing Jacob's Ladder*.



Wendie Bernstein Lash – administrative director, was in the first Morei Derekh training cohort. She trained as a Morah L'Hitbodedut, Jewish meditation instructor, at Chochmat HaLev Center for Jewish Spirituality. She has a Masters degree in counseling and leads services, facilitates groups and teaches in the San Francisco Bay Area.



The Rebbe of Kotzk asked his students: "Where is God to be found?" They responded with puzzlement, "God's presence fills all of creation!" The Rebbe answered: "No, God is found wherever we let God in."

How to contact Yedidya Center for Jewish Spiritual Direction

For more information, please visit our website at: www.yedidyacenter.org

To schedule a program or consultation with Yedidya staff, please contact Wendie Bernstein Lash, at: 650-365-6093 or wendie@yedidyacenter.org

To continue to receive mailings about Yedidya programs, contact info@yedidyacenter.org

"Take responsibility for your own spiritual life. It is we who lock God out of our lives. Therefore open your heart, training your heart to fill up with God's presence and God's love." - Rabbi Art Green

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Photos taken by Richard Lenson at a Yedidya retreat. Photo this page by Wendie Bernstein Lash at a Yedidya retreat.