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**SP/HB6/710 - LISTENING TO THE HEART OF GENESIS: A CONTEMPLATIVE
PATH**

**July 3-7, 2023, 9am-12pm
Course Description**

PURPOSE: The purpose of the course is to introduce students to a new gateway to the Book of Genesis through a Jewish contemplative practice called *kriat hakodesh* (reading the sacred) which has its roots in the Christian practice of *lectio divina*. Students will learn at least five important stories from the Book of Genesis and the method of *kriat hakodesh* which consists of repetitive reading of the biblical text, silence and personal questions that link of the biblical matriarchs and patriarchs with our personal lives. In addition to learning the Genesis stories, students will learn how to offer the contemplative practice to others with whom they work.

PREREQUISITES: For MA or M.Div students taking course for advanced Hebrew Bible credit, HB500 and BIBL500 or Biblical Hebrew are pre-requisites; other students have no pre-requisites

COMPETENCE OBJECTIVES:

Ability to read the biblical text in Genesis and understand and identify the essential ‘problems and challenges of the text. The students will learn the contemplative practice of *kriat hakodesh* and will be able to lead individuals and groups in the practice. They will be able to integrate the notion of personalizing biblical text and integrating it into their own lives.

FORMAT AND CONTENT:

This class meets daily July 3-7 from 9am-12pm. The class will be interactive — a combination of lectures by the instructor, close and slow, repetitive listening to the Genesis text, learning of midrashic (rabbinic) teachings about the text, silent contemplation of the teachings and on personal questions posed by the instructor. The final element of the class will be a class sharing of the spiritual and emotional experience of each class. Additionally, in classes number 4 and 5, small groups students will be tasked with designing their own *kriat hakodesh* sessions and presenting them to their fellow students, so that they may have “hands on” experience of the contemplative method. (There is a facilitator’s guide available in the primary textbook for the class)

Zoom students will be expected to read the required text and watch the *kriat hakodesh* sessions presented by the instructor and the students.

TEXTS:

Listening to the Heart of Genesis: A Contemplative Path, Cascade Books, Wipf and Stock Publishers, Eugene, Oregon: 2021.

EXPECTATIONS, ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

The expectations and assignments in this course include:

- active class participation in discussions,
- participation in a small group enactment of a *kriat hakodesh session in a text from Genesis*,
- **Certificate Students:** a short (3-4 pages) reflection paper on your personal response to this contemplative practice and your thoughts on one story from Genesis and how it might be used in *kriat ha-kodesh*.
- **Diploma/MA/MDiv:** above reflection paper plus final research paper (4-6 pages)
- **Th.M/GDTS:** reflection paper plus final research paper of 8-10 pages

Details for all assignments will be provided in the syllabus.”

Due date: July 31st (Certificate, Diploma, MA, MDIV); Aug 28th (Th.M, GDTS)

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

As this is the first book on *kriat hakodesh* and it is a relatively new practice, there are no other books on it. However, there is a good collection of books on Jewish meditation. Some highlights are:

- Kaplan, Aryeh, *Meditation and the Bible*, York Beach Maine: Weiser, 1981.
- Lew, Alan, *Be Still and Get Going: A Jewish Meditation Practice for Real Life*, New York: Little-Brown, 2005.
- Pinson, DovBer, *Meditation and Judaism: Exploring Jewish Meditative Paths*, Northvale, N.J.: Aronson: 2004.
- Roth, Jeff, *Jewish Meditation Practices for Everyday Life: Awakening Your Heart, Connecting with God*, Woodstock, VT., Jewish Lights, 2009
- Roth, Jeff, *Me, Myself and God: A Theology of Mindfulness*, Woodstock VT., Jewish Lights, 2016.