

# Inter-denominational Rabbinical Student Retreat

## Creating and Leading Jewish Spiritual Communities

This retreat will explore ways that Jews can create contexts for deep engagement with Torah, social justice, spirituality and intentional community, both within synagogues and beyond. For rabbis of the future to be successful will require much more than the skills and knowledge that one can acquire in rabbinical school. It will require settings in which you can learn from rabbis who have themselves challenged convention and taken risks in building vibrant spiritual communities. It will also require the ability to reach across denominational and institutional lines to build relationships and learn from those whose perspectives and backgrounds are very different than your own.

Since 2005 over 500 rabbinical students have attended an inter-denominational retreat led by Rabbi Sid Schwarz. This retreat is open to all rabbinical and cantorial students from co-sponsoring seminaries, whether they are alumni of past retreats or first-time participants. There will also be two student-led sessions with presenters and topics chosen by a student steering committee.

- Enjoy a highly-subsidized 4-day retreat in a beautiful and warm venue
- Meet and build relationships with future colleagues
- Explore ideas that will make you a more creative and effective spiritual leader
- Experience a pluralistic Shabbat and *tefillah* that will nourish your soul
- Learn from nationally renowned teachers and practitioners and from your peers

**Date:** January 31st-February 3, 2019 (Thursday-Sunday)

**Place:** Camp Ramah, Ojai, CA (Zimmer Retreat Center)

**Faculty:** Rabbis Rachel Nussbaum and Sid Schwarz

Registration is \$180 per student with a generous travel subsidy provided.

For more information, contact Lisa Sacks at [lisa.sacks@hazon.org](mailto:lisa.sacks@hazon.org)

### 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 CA), Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies, Yeshivat Chovevei Torah Rabbinical School, Yeshivat Maharat, International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism and the ALEPH Rabbinic Program.

## **Faculty Bios**

**Rabbi Rachel Nussbaum** serves as both the Rabbi and Executive Director of [the Kavana Cooperative](#), which she co-founded in Seattle in 2006. Kavana has received numerous awards and grants for its innovative approach to building Jewish community and continues to experiment and grow. In recent years, Rachel has also played a critical role in launching the [Jewish Emergent Network](#), which brings together the leaders of seven organizations from across the country (IKAR, Kavana, The Kitchen, Lab/Shul, Mishkan, Romemu, Sixth & I) that have applied an entrepreneurial approach to building Jewish community. Rachel has been a recipient of the prestigious AVI CHAI Fellowship, the Joshua Venture Group Fellowship, and the Wexner Graduate Fellowship. Originally from Charleston, South Carolina, she holds degrees from Duke University and the Jewish Theological Seminary, where she specialized in Midrash. Last but not least, Rachel enjoys cooking, hiking, and traveling with her husband Noam Pianko and their three kids, Yona, Mia and Elisha.

**Rabbi Sid Schwarz** is a social entrepreneur, author and teacher and a senior fellow at [Hazon](#). He created and directs the [Clergy Leadership Incubator](#) (CLI), a program that trains rabbis to be visionary spiritual leaders. He also created and directs the [Kenissa: Communities of Meaning Network](#) which is building the capacity of emerging spiritual communities across the country. Sid 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 latest book is *Jewish Megatrends: Charting the Course of the American Jewish Future* (Jewish Lights, 2013).

### **Comments from past participants**

*"The retreat container was a safe place to take risks and try on new modes of communal engagement... At times our discussions stretched my theological and tribal comfort and assumptions; this too is Torah to learn."*

Tanya Farber, Yeshivat Maharat

*"(On this retreat I learned that) difference does not break peoplehood. In fact, our diversity, our differences, Jewish plurality, makes us stronger, for we seek unity not uniformity. The retreat modeled pluralism in real time in a way that I never thought possible."*

David Reinhart, HUC-JIR (Cincinnati)

*"In a mere three days, the group developed strong bonds of trust and shared experience. These were even more remarkable given the denominational diversity of participants – from a secular humanist to Orthodox yeshiva students, with many flavors of Jew in between."*

Laura Lewis Mandeles,  
ALEPH Ordination Program

*"Brilliantly and inspiringly led by Rabbi Sid Schwarz in partnership with Rabbi Laura Geller, this retreat provided me with a rare opportunity of sharing views, ideas, and practices with several other Jewish denominations with which I would never have come into contact."*

Marcelle Hohl, Jewish Theological Seminary

*"In a world where congregations don't adhere to strict denominational politics, this retreat was (pun intended) a Godsend...It was a jolt of inspiration."*

Sam Yolen, Academy of Jewish Religion, NY

*"This retreat was one of the most valuable, applicable, and transferrable experiences of rabbinic training I have had since my studies began."*

Michael Nash, Yeshivat Chovevei Torah

*"The sessions led by Rabbi Sid and Rabbi Laura Geller were incredibly powerful...what really made these sessions special was the modeling of respectful conversation, listening, and responding. We were able to address difficult topics in a way that strengthened our respect and love for one another (rather than the all-too-often opposites)."*

Eliza Slavet, Academy of Jewish Religion, CA