

Syllabus: Judaism and Kabbalah 101

Similar things have occurred over the millennia and commemorated each month of the year on the Jewish calendar. Those events are noted in each class, allowing you to gain an overview of the history of the Jews from the creation of mankind to the present day. Each class is divided by the months of the calendar. This way you can learn about the history, holidays and traditions practiced month by month. Ultimately you gain an understanding of the deeper meanings observed and applied.

Each class contains lecture, handouts and a layout for using the Kabbalah cards. The layouts are an added bonus - the Kabbalah cards, though helpful, are not required for this course.

Below is a list of what is covered in each class.

Class 1 – the month of Kislev - Miracles

- Analogy of the sun and moon for understanding the difference and relationship between G-d and this world.
- Concept of concealment and hiddenness - tsimtzum
- Concept of “Ain Od Milvado”- there is nothing else but G-d.
- Idea of the benefit of challenges.
- Greeks, Hasmoneans, Miracles of Hanukkah & definition of miracle.
- Handout/homework on looking for the “light” in the “darkness”

Class 2 – the month of Tevet - Anger

- Four levels of understanding/interpreting Torah
- History/overview of Kabbalah, books, famous rabbis
- Introducing the Tree of Life
- A focus on the sefirah of Gevurah and anger
- Handout/homework on using the Tree of Life to move through anger

Class 3- the month of Shevat – Trees/Tree of Life

- Understanding the Talmudic concept of “man is a tree in the field”
- Holiday of Tu B’Shvat as the New year for the trees
- Foods traditionally eaten on Tu B’Shvat – from the trees of Israel
- Overview of Tree of Life in more detail – giving an example of a child's development through the sefirot
- Handout/homework/layout on identifying personal strengths and weaknesses through the various character traits outlined in the Tree of Life.

Class 4 – the month of Adar - Joy

- Overview of story of Purim holiday, customs & deeper significance
- Understanding the meaning of wine in Jewish holidays
- Seeing how the Tree of Life can help us navigate the Inner Child & the Inner Critic. I explain why I associate the Inner Nurturing Parent with G-d.
- Handout/homework for developing a relationship with the Inner Nurturing Parent/G-d

Class 5 – the month of Nissan - Freedom

- Overview of holiday of Passover, its history, customs & its deeper analogy to the human experience of self-imposed “slavery” and limitations
- Courage to leave “slavery” and what it means to have “freedom” internally as well as externally
- Meaning of the seder
- Overview of a class taught by Rabbi Asher Crispe on the significance of speech, communication, telling a story, the technology of today, the importance of questions on the spiritual quest

Class 6 – the month of Iyar - Introspection

- Significance of the 49 days of Counting the Omer & what is “Ethics of our Fathers”?
- Opportunity to purchase a book by Rabbi Simon Jacobson to guide each of the 49 days
- Further details on the Tree of Life and how and we can only understand the character traits fully by seeing how they interact with each other
- Manna in the desert & how it relates to faith and money issues
- Overview, customs of holiday of Lag B-Omer
- What about the number 7 – 7 emotions, 7 days of the week, Sabbath the 7th day & Layout of 7 emotions

Class 7 – the month of Sivan - Morality

- Overview of the 10 Commandments compared to the 7 Noahide Laws
- Holiday of Shavuot as the birthday of morality on earth.
- Understanding anti-Semitism and anger about rules and laws – associating the Inner Critical Parent and the rebellious Inner Child
- Looking at morality and ethics from the perspective of the Nurturing Inner Parent, rather than from the Inner Critic
- Knowing the difference between a mature and immature perspective on religion and G-d
- Looking closer at the Commandment to honor parents

Class 8 – the month of Tammuz – Confronting Mistakes

- The history of Tammuz
- Tradition of a mourning period between the 17th through the 9th of Av.
- Commemorating the mistakes of our ancestors and ourselves
- A layout for Tammuz

Class 9- the month of Av - Mourning

- Why the emphasis on the Temple in Jerusalem?
- Understanding what the destruction of both Temples meant to the Jewish people.
- Introducing the concept of exile & redemption and how that applies to our lives today.
- Introducing the idea of “Hashgacha Pratit” – that everything happens for a reason.

Class 10 – the month of Elul - Reparations

- What is “Teshuvah”? Why is there an emphasis on “return” and making restitution and amends this month?
- Introducing Moses, the Golden Calf, and the 40 days of finding the 13 Attributes of Mercy
- How we can bring that mercy into our lives now and how we lost it as children through the building of an Inner Critic

- The challenges of marriage and how it's symbolic of the relationship between G-d and the Jewish people.

Class 11 – the month of Tishrei – New Beginnings

- Overview of the High Holy Days, their purpose and themes & how to apply them to our lives in the present-day.
- How does the creation of mankind relate to these holidays?
- Introducing many concepts: forgiveness, making amends, “Dina d’Tachtonim” – G-d’s wish to have a home in this lower world, “Golus” & “Geula” – exile & redemption.
- Homework given to help demonstrate exile and redemption in our own consciousness within our mundane lives.

Class 12 – the month of Cheshvan - Purpose

- Overview of the generations of mankind and the ancestral lines outlined in Genesis.
- Where we get the word “Semites”.
- History of the many difficulties that occurred for the Jewish people in this month – among these are the Flood of Noah, Kristallnacht, the Mumbai Terror attacks.
- Introducing Soul Garments of Thought, Speech & Action.
- Handout and writing exercise to move from golus to geula in thought, speech and action.