Jewish Spiritual Practices

Dr. James Jacobson Maisels

Course Number: 702.2271
Class Time: TBA
Class Location: TBA
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Practice can be seen as at the core of the spiritual or religious life. This course focuses on a variety of spiritual technologies in Judaism. Each week a different practice will be explored through primary sources in translation and will aim to introduce students to the breadth and depth of Jewish spiritual practices. Methodological considerations of the nature of spiritual practice as a category, both religiously and academically, and its distinction from ritual and commandment, in both the history of Judaism and religious studies, will accompany our exploration of these practices. Texts and practices will range from the Hebrew Bible to twentieth century musar and Hasidic texts, though a particular emphasis is placed on Kabbalistic and Hasidic literature. Through this course students will be introduced to the necessary terminology, categories and context to understand the purpose, function and place of Jewish spiritual practices within the Jewish tradition.

Course Requirements:
- Weekly text-study of primary sources as well as selected secondary sources.
- Weekly one page reflection on the readings.
- Weekly practice homework and google group post on the weekly practice.
- Final Project

Final Grade:
- Weekly writing assignments 25%
- Weekly reading and class participation 25%
- Weekly practice homework and posts 10%
- Final project 40%

Submitting Your Work
Weekly writing assignments should be submitted by email to jamesmoshejm@gmail.com as word documents with the title “Your Name” – “The Subject of that Week”. For example John Henry – Fellowship.
Weekly posting should be posted through the Moodle site by clicking on the posting button and sharing your thoughts for that week using the subject line of that week’s subject if someone else has not already begun a thread that you can reply to.
The final project should be emailed to jamesmoshejm@gmail.com by the date final projects are due by the University.
Course Outline and Reading List

1. Mindfulness Meditation and The Quieting Practice of the Piaseczner Rebbe
   a. Formal Practice

   Primary Sources
   R. Kalonymus Kalmish Shapira, The Subject of Quieting, Derekh HaMelekh, p. 450-451

   Secondary Sources:

   b. Practice in Everyday Life

   Primary Sources
   R. Kalonymus Kalmish Shapira, Derekh HaMelekh, Breishit, p. 5,
   R. Kalonymus Kalmish Shapira, Haksharat HaAvreikhim, Chapt. 9, Part 4

   Secondary Sources:

2. Fellowship, Love and Community as a Spiritual practice
   a. Hasidic Co-counseling

   Primary Sources
   R. Moshe Cordovero, Hanhagot, #14
   R. Moshe Cordovero, Hanhagot, #15
   R. Abraham Kalisker, Pri HaAretz, Letters, Letter 30
   R. Abraham Kalisker, Pri HaAretz, Letters, Letter 6
   R. Kalonymus Kalmish Shapira, Bnei Mahshavha Tovah, Membership in the Community
   R. Kalonymus Kalmish Shapira, Bnei Mahshavha Tovah, Group Commitments and Advice, 54-58

   Secondary Sources:


### b. Community as a Spiritual Practice

*Primary Sources*

Zohar II, 190b

R. Hayyim Vital, *Shaar HaKavvanot*, p. 2

R. Aaron/Arele Roth, *Shomer Emunim*, 5719, 237b

R. Hayyim Vital, *Shaarei Kedushah*, Part 1, Gate 5, Sec. 1

R. Moshe Cordovero, *Tomer Devorah*, Chapt. 2

Beit El Contract, 1754

R. Hanokh Henikh of Alesk, *Seder Lev Sameah*

R. Mordechai of Chernobyl, *Likutei Torah*, 61c

R. Kalonymus Kalmish Shapira, *Hovat ha-Talmidim*, 147

*Secondary Sources:*


### 3. Avodah be-Gashmiyut (worship in corporeality) and Mindful Eating

#### a. The Nature of Corporeality and Mindful Eating

*Primary Sources*


R. Jacob Joseph of Polonne, *Toldot Yaakov Yosef*, *Naso*, p. 474

R. Jacob Joseph of Polonne, *Ketonet Passim*, pp. 25b-26a
R. Menahem Nahum of Chernobyl, Meor Einayim, pp. 235-6
R. Menahem Nahum of Chernobyl, Meor Einayim, p. 327
Besht, brought in R. Abraham Issachar Baer Rabinowitz of Radomsk, *Hesed le-Avraham*, p. 104b
R. Dov Baer (Berl) Ehrman, Devarim Arevim, Part I, sec. 11

*Secondary Sources:*

b. The Body, the Commandments, and Sanctifying the Corporeal

*Primary Sources*
R. Menahem Nahum of Chernobyl, Meor Einayim, p. 240-1
R. Zev Wolf of Zhitomir, Or ha-Meir, p. 241
The Besht, brought in R. Yaakov Joseph of Polonne, Tzafnaat Paneah, p. 260
R. Dov Baer the Maggid of Mezhirech, Tzavaat ha-Rivash, sec. 68
R. Dov Baer the Maggid of Mezhirech, Maggid Devarav le-Yaakov, sec. 24

*Secondary Sources:*

4. Music and Song as a Spiritual Practice
   a. Music and Song I: Ecstatic Song

*Primary Sources*
2 Kings 3:11-16
1 Samuel 10:1-13
1 Chronicles 25:1
Pesachim 117a
Maimonides, Hilkhot Yesodei Torah, 7:4
R. Dov Baer of Lubavitch, Shaarei Teshuvah 2 p. 15a-b
R. Kalonymus Kalman Shapira, Bnei Mahshavah Tova, sec. 18

Secondary Sources:

b. Music and Song II: Ecstatic and Aesthetic Song

Primary Sources
R. Abraham Abulafia, Gan Naul, Mbs, Cod. hebr. 58 (IMHM 23117), 324a-b
Sod has-Shalselet, Sodot, Pn, Ms. heb. 790 (IMHM 12622), 141a-b
Hayyim Vital, Shaarei Kedushah, Part 4, Lbm, Ms. Add. 19,788 (IMHM 5003), 15b

Secondary Sources:

5. Generosity and Restraint

a. Generosity and Spiritual Practice

Primary Sources
Lev. 25
Exodus 35:5-35
Avot 2:8
Avot 3:7
Berakhot 5a
Rashi Berakhot 5a
Midrash Rabbah - Leviticus XXXIV:14
Rambam, Laws of Gifts to the Poor 7:5
Zohar III 113b
Hayyim Vital, Sha’ar HaMitzvot, Parshat Re’eh, p. 111
R. Abraham Berukhim, Hanhagot
R. Abraham Galante, Hanhagot, 27
R. Aaron Berakhia of Modena, Maavar Yabok, Siftei Renanot, Chpt. 31, Vitamir, 5612, 148b
R. Yaakov Zemah, Nagid Mitzvah, Amsterdam 5702, 24b
R. Nahman of Bratslav, Sefer ha-Midot, tzedaka, # 58
R. Benjamin Matatyah, Taharot Kodesh, Amsterdam, 5493, 44c

a. Generosity and Restraint and Spiritual Practice

Primary Sources
Hagiga 12a
R. Kalonymus Kalmish Shapira, Esh Kodesh, Parshat Zachor, 1942
Maimonides Mishne Torah, Laws of Vowed Property – Haramim and Arachin 8:13

6. Self-Acceptance, Radical acceptance and Distracting Thoughts in the Hasidic tradition
a. Welcoming in and Transforming Distracting Thoughts (Mahshavot Zarot)

Primary Sources
Besht, brought in R. Jacob Joseph of Polonne, Ben Porat Yosef, 94a
Besht, brought in R. Jacob Joseph of Polonne, Ben Porat Yosef, 339-40
Besht, Keter Shem Tov, 87c
Besht, Keter Shem Tov, 75
Besht, Keter Shem Tov, 172
Besht, Keter Shem Tov, 39
R. Dov Baer the Maggid of Mezhirech, Maggid Devarav Le-Yaakov, 29, p. 48
R. Ephraim of Sudylkow, Degel Mahaneh Efrayim, Noah, U-Petah
R. Dov Baer the Maggid of Mezhirech, Maggid Devarav Le-Yaakov, 161, pp. 258-9
R. Ephraim of Sudylkow, Degel Mahaneh Efrayim, 111

Secondary Sources:

b. Accepting and Cherishing Oneself

Primary Sources
Avot 2:13
R. Mordechai Joseph Leiner, Mei ha-Shiloah, Beshalah, ve-lo shamu
R. Nahman of Bratslav, Likutei Moharan I:282
Issachar Baer of Zloczow, Mevasser Zedeq, VaYigash, Lemberg 1863, p. 7b
Issachar Baer of Zloczow, Mevasser Zedeq, Lemberg 1863, Parshat Shemot, p. 8a-b

Secondary Sources:

7. Stories and Masks as a Spiritual Practice
   a. Hasidic Stories

Primary Sources
Exodus 13:8
Pesah Haggadah
Shivhei ha-Besht, 158, p. 256
R. Aaron of Karlin, Beit Karlin-Stolin, p. 208, 1981
R. Jacob Isaac the Seer of Lublin, Sippure Tzaddikim he-Hadash, p. 1, Jerusalem 5765-2005
Ish HaPele p. 195-6 (1987, Jerusalem)
R. Shlomo of Radomsk, Tiferet Shelomo, Hanukkah, p. 72, from Niflaot ha-Tiferet Shelomo, Yaffah Sihatn, p. 15, #45


Sefer ha-Dorot ha-Hadash p. 46 (1965 Jer.)


R. Joseph Isaac Schneerson of Lubavitch, Rebbe Rayatz, a volume of Sefer ha-Toldot, II, p. 138 (1987 Kehot, Brooklyn)

Zemah Zedek, brought in Rabbeinu ha-Kadosh of Shinov, p. 9

Geshuri, M, Song and Dance in Hasidism, p. 28 (1954 Tel Aviv)

R. Menahem Mendel of Kotsk, Emet ve-Emunah p. 111 (1972 Jer, ed. Orton)


Secondary Sources:

b. The Tales of R. Nahman of Bratslav

Primary Sources

The Humble King

Likutei Moharan I 60:6
Likutei Moharan I 60:7
Likutei Moharan I 60:8
Sichot HaRan 109

Secondary Sources:

8. Death Meditation
   a. Death Contemplation

Primary Sources
Bavli Tamid 32a
Bavli Gittin 57b
Bavli Berakhot 5a
R. Kalonymus Kalmish Shapira, Bne Mahshavah Tova, Sec. 8
R. Isaiah Horowitz, Shne Luhot ha-berit, Amsterdam 5458, Masechet Pesachim, 145a-146a, (הגהה)
R. Elimelekh of Litzhensk, Hanhagot ha-Adam 3
R. Elimelekh of Litzhensk, Noam Elimelekh, Va-Yihi, d'h va-yikrevu yamei Yisrael
Ethical Will of R. Naftali ha-Kohen Katz, 5517, Bern, 18b
Bavli Berakhot 61b

Secondary Sources:

b. Spiritual Death

Primary Sources
R. Moshe De Leon, Book of the Pomegranate, 1988, pp. 225-6
Besht, Keter Shem Tov, #42
Elimelekh of Litzhensk, Tzetl Kotn, 1-3
R. Hayyim Vital, Shaar ha-Kavvanot, Nefilat Apayim, Derush 2

Secondary Sources:

9. Prayer Techniques
   a. Conceptions of Prayer

Primary Sources
b. Prayer Techniques: Meditative and Linguistic Techniques

Primary Sources
R. Yehudah heHasid, Sefer Hasidim, sec. 158
R. Moshe Teitelbaum, Hanhagot Tzaddikim, Hanhagot Yesharot p. 47, 4:3
R. Shmelke of Nikolsburg, Ohel Yitzhak, Jer., 1968, p. 74
Rabbi Nahum of Chernobyl, Hanhagot Tzaddikim, Jer. 1976, ed. Malik p. 36, #17
R. Alexander Ziskind, Yesod v'Shoreh ha-Avodah, Gate 5, chap. 1, p. 144, Bnei Barak.
R. Alexander Ziskind, Yesod v'Shoreh ha-Avodah, Gate 5, chap. 3, p. 148-9, Bnei Barak.
On Rabbi Naftali Hayim Horowitz, Otzar ha-Sippurim, Helek 11, p. 12, ed. Moscowitz, Jer. 1951-1959

 Secondary Sources:

10. Bratslaver Hitbodedut

a. Hitbodedut I

Primary Sources
Likutei Moharan II, 25
Likutei Moharan II, 96
Sihot Moharan, 229
Sihot Moharan 227
Hayyei Moharahn I:4 (107), His Birth-place, Residence and Travels
Hayyei II:10 (241), His Awesome Attainments

b. Hitbodedut II

Primary Sources
Sihot Moharan 230
Sihot Moharan 231
Sihot Moharan 228
Sihot Moharan 234
Sihot Moharan 232
Sihot Moharan 233

Secondary Sources:

11. Desire, Craving and Equanimity
   a. Equanimity and Non-Attachment

Primary Sources
R. Dov Baer the Maggid of Mezhirech, Tzava’at HaRivash, sec. 2-3
Rambam, Commentary on the Mishnah, Avot 4:4
R. Zadok of Lublin, Risisei Leila 28a-b, 55-6

Secondary Sources:

b. Desire, Passion and Spiritual Practice

Primary Sources
Isaac of Acre, in R. Elijah de Vidas, Reshit Hokhmah, Sha’ar ha-Ahavah, Chapt. 4, I:426, no. 31-2
R. Moshe Cordovero, Zohar, Or Yakar, vol. 10, p. 65-6
R. Dov Baer the Maggid of Mezhirech, Maggid Devarav L’Yaakov, Likutim Hadashim, pp. 389-90.
R. Dov Baer the Maggid of Mezhirech, Maggid Devarav le-Yaakov, 161, pp. 260-1
R. Dov Baer the Maggid of Mezhirech, Maggid Devarav le-Yaakov, 51
R. Zadok ha-Kohen, Zidkat ha-Zaddik, 181
R. Kalonymus Kalmish Shapira, Mavo ha-Shaarim, p. 23
Besht, brought in R. Abraham Issachar Baer Rabinowitz of Radomsk, Hesed l’Avraham, p. 104b
Secondary Sources:


12. Movement and Dance

a. Spontaneous Movement and Dance

Primary Sources

Exodus 15:20
Psalm 149:3
Psalm 150:4
2 Samuel 6:14-22
Metzudat David, on II Samuel 6:22
Keter Shem Tov, 215, p. 122-3, Kehot 2004
In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov 39, p. 53

Secondary Sources:


b. Hasidic Dance

Primary Sources

M. S. Geshurei, “the Besht as Renower of Dance”, Ha-Tzofeh 14, Tishre 5712, p. 5
In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov 109, p. 134
In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov 61, p. 80
Jiri Langer, Nine Gates pp. 6-8
Hayyei Moharan #340, The Greatness of His Books and Teachings
R. Nahman of Bratslav, Likutei Moharan, I:32
R. Nahman of Bratslav, Likutei Moharan II:24

Secondary Sources:

13. Visualization and Guided Imagery
   a. Visualizing God

*Primary Sources*
Ezekiel 1:1-28
Isaiah 6:1-3
Sanhedrin 22a
Tur, Orekh Hayyim, 98
Rashi, Yoma 53b, la-semol didakh
Rabbeinu Hananel b. Hushiel, Otzar ha-Geonim, vol. 1, Berakhot, appendix, p. 3
Chapter on the Kavvanah by the Early Kabbalists
R. Judah Albotini, Sulam Ha-Aliyah, 73, Jer. 5749
R. Eleazar Azikri, Milei de-Shamaya, Pachter ed., p. 103, §12-13
Hayyim Vital, Shaare Kedushah, pt. 3, chpt. 5, pp. 89-90
R. Kalonymus Kalmish Shapira, Bnei Mahshavah Tovah, sec. 7, pp. 19-20
Bnei Mahshavha Tovan, sec. 13, p. 32
Bnei Mahshavha Tova, sec. 13, p. 32

*Secondary Sources:*

b. Visualizing Torah, Mitzvot and the Heavens
Primary Sources

R. Elimelekh of Lzhensk, Noam Elimelekh, Lekh Lekha, ve-hine davar hashem elav

R. Kalonymus Kalmish Shapira, Hakhsharat Avrekhim, p. 33 (79)

R. Kalonymus Kalmish Shapira, Hakhsharat Avrekhim, p. 85

R. Kalonymus Kalmish Shapira, Hakhsharat Avrekhim, p. 85

R. Kalonymus Kalmish Shapira, Hakhsharat Avrekhim, p. 37

Bnei Mahshavah Tovah, pp. 27-30
