



Gerard von Honthorst, David Playing the Harp, 1622

A CELEBRATION OF PSALMS

Tuesday, March 16th, 6:00 pm

Followed by an Artists' Reception on Zoom

Spoken word, music, art and multimedia by the students of the CBST Psalms Class.
This event marks exactly one year since the beginning of the class.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהַחַיָּנוּ וְקִיּוֹמָנוּ וְהַגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמֶן הַזֶּה

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, shehecheyanu
v'key'manu v'higiyanu lazman hazeh.*

Praised are You, Spirit of the Universe, who keeps us alive, sustains us,
and brings us to this moment.

PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

Artist(s)	Inspiration	Medium
Judy Ribnick	Ps 121	Song
Joan Friedman	Dayenu	Spoken Word
Students of the Alef-Level Hebrew Class	Psalm 1	Spoken Word

ONE PSALM, A MULTITUDE OF INTERPRETATIONS

Ira Rosenblum	11	Spoken Word
Ora Ezrachi	11	Spoken Word
Sherri Felt Dratfield	11	Spoken Word
Kohenet Judith Hollander	11	Spoken Word
Kol Goodstein	11	Spoken Word
Simon Dratfield and Randi Sarokoff	11	Multimedia
Linda Solomon	11	Spoken Word
Stephen David Dym	11	Spoken Word
Cantor Jacob Niemi	3 and 4	Song

MIRRORING THE FORM OF THE PSALM

Jack Nieman	12	Spoken Word
Randy Axelrod	15	Spoken Word
Leah Trachten and Regina Linder	8	Spoken Word
Alice Sayles	14	Spoken Word
Cindy Levitz	Various	Multimedia
Sara Sloan	13	Spoken Word
Sheppard Wahnnon	13	Spoken Word
Dorothy Leland	13	Spoken Word
Kristen Plylar-Moore and Julia Ostrov	1?	Song

RESPONDING TO COVID-19

Donna Gray	13	Spoken Word
Randi Sarokoff	4	Spoken Word
Regina Linder	3	Spoken Word
Kenneth Karpel	1	Multimedia
Barbara Grindell	27	Spoken Word
Laurie Krotman	6	Spoken Word
Andrea Katz	4	Spoken Word
Sally Kopstein	9	Spoken Word

INTERPRETING A PSALM THROUGH MOVEMENT**CONFRONTING THE PSALMIST**

Goldalee Katsanis-Semel and Jack Nieman	14	Song
Judy Frank	15	Spoken Word
Allison Drew Klein	4	Spoken Word
Ben Shafran	9 and 10	Spoken Word

TAKING INSPIRATION FROM THE PSALMIST

Maryann King	11	Multimedia
Darina Ivanova	1	Spoken Word
Robin Baslaw	9	Spoken Word
Ruth Plave	14	Spoken Word
Lin Rosenbluth	8	Spoken Word
Dean Dresser	Various	Multimedia
Linda Watskin	12	Spoken Word
Scott Soloway	12	Spoken Word
Monica Raymond	15	Spoken Word
Sarah Siegel	12	Spoken Word
Peter Klein	9	Spoken Word
Marsha Melnick	27	Spoken Word

FAREWELL

Cantor Jacob Niemi	150	Song
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THE CBST PSALMS CLASS

Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum

I first encountered *Sefer Tehillim*, the Book of Psalms, in 1974, as a 15-years-old transfer student from public school to Frisch Yeshiva High School in New Jersey. It has been a vital part of my life ever since.

Many years and a few lifetimes later, as the rabbi at Congregation Beit Simchat Torah during the height of the HIV-AIDS crisis, I often recited *tehillim* at the beds of sick and dying congregants. And then, while sitting with their bodies after death, I would take out my small copy of *Sefer Tehillim* and read them before the body would be taken away for burial.

During two very serious surgeries of my own, I asked the CBST community to engage in a psalms project in which congregants, friends, and family signed up to recite a psalm each day. In that way, the entire book would be recited on my behalf daily. I took the list of 150 psalms with me to the hospital and looked at the list of the assigned “reciter” and felt enveloped and comforted by both the words of the psalms and the love of those reciting them. In the process, I received many moving letters from people describing their growing relationship to “their” psalm.

In response to the Coronavirus pandemic, I started working from home in early March 2020. I announced to the CBST community that I would begin teaching the psalms starting March 16, doing so every morning for 30 minutes, Monday through Thursday. Initially, I thought we would study one psalm a day, providing students with a brief overview of each poem and the opportunity to reflect on it. By the end of the first week we realized the class wanted to be something else. We extended it to 45 minutes and decided to give each psalm as much time as it needed. As of this writing, we've been studying for exactly one year and we just completed our study of Psalm 18, having dedicated the entire month of Elul to close study of Psalm 27 and two weeks in both the summer and the fall to a lay-led read through of Psalms 1 to 139, in both Hebrew and English.

We start our study of each psalm in Hebrew with the basic JPS/Sefaria translation. We then compare and contrast this with interpretations and adaptations by Robert Alter, Gaya Aranoff Bernstein, Norman Fischer, Richard Levy, Stephen Mitchell and others. Participants are then invited to create their own responses to the psalm – which we call “offerings” – based on the psalm text and informed by the translations and commentaries we have reviewed. Some creators are accomplished writers, while others had never written a poem before. Some are visual artists, others are composers. Covid-19 has been a shadow over the class since the beginning, and it has shown up in many of the class's creative offerings. Each piece of writing, artwork, or song is shared by the creator in class, as they discuss their creative process. For Rosh Hashanah, we recorded the writings inspired by Psalm 8, the psalm for the holiday, and shared them onscreen before our live-streamed services.

The CBST Psalms Class is engaged in holy work in the midst of terrible, uncertain, and frightening times. The art we're creating reflects the depth and breadth of human experience found in the original Book of Psalms written thousands of years ago. This class has been the anchor to my days and to my spiritual life during this unprecedented moment in time—and many class members have shared this sentiment. I am deeply grateful to all the students who are journeying with me.

THE BOOK OF PSALMS

The Book of Psalms, also known as *Sefer Tehillim*, is a compilation of 150 Hebrew texts in poetic form. In the Hebrew Bible, it makes up the first part of *Ketuvim*, (the Writings). Traditionally attributed to King David, scholars now believe these texts were compiled over approximately five centuries, from 1000 BCE to 500 BCE. The oldest partial psalm text is from the Dead Sea Scrolls (first century BCE); the oldest complete Hebrew text dates from approximately 1000 CE.

The Book of Psalms has been the basis of personal devotion and communal worship in the original Hebrew for Jews since their composition; they make up a significant part of the Jewish Siddur (prayer book), including the Hallel. There is a tradition (*Shmirah*) of reciting psalms to comfort the soul of the deceased between death and burial. Translated into Greek and Latin, they have been central to Christian worship for millennia; the best-known translation into English was done for the King James Bible. There are thousands of musical settings of psalms dating back to earliest composers of the Western tradition.

It has been said that in the Torah, G/d speaks to humans, in the Book of Psalms, humans speak to G/d.

TEXTS USED FOR THE CBST PSALMS CLASS

Sefaria.org, the leading online repository of Jewish texts, offers the Book of Psalms in Hebrew and English, with linked notes on the text.

Metsudah Tehillim. A pocket-sized volume, with facing Hebrew and English. A traditional, relatively literal translation. [Amazon link.](#)

Robert Alter, “The Book of Psalms.” A relatively new translation, with fascinating essays and copious notes. [Amazon link.](#)

Rabbi Richard Levy, “Songs Ascending: The Book of Psalms.” Hebrew and English text with notes and Levy’s comments on “spiritual applications” for each psalm. [Amazon link.](#)

Norman Fischer, “Opening to You.” Zen-inspired personal interpretations of the psalm texts. Not all psalms are included. [Amazon link.](#)

Stephen Mitchell, “A Book of Psalms.” Personal interpretations of the psalms. Not all psalms are included. [Amazon link.](#)

Gaya Aronoff Bernstein, “Psalmsongs.” The first half contains Bernstein’s personal interpretations of all 150 psalms. The second half contains prose translations with introductory comments by Rabbi Adin Even-Israel Steinsaltz for each psalm, plus the Hebrew Text. [Amazon link.](#)

JOIN US!

The Psalms Class is offered Monday through Thursday, 10:00 am to 10:45 am, with a 15-minute pre-class schmooze from 9:45 to 10:00 am. It is open to members and non-members alike. Newcomers are always welcome to the class. Learn more at CBST.org/Psalms.

THANKS

PSALMS CLASS

Teachers

Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum
Rabbi Mike Moskowitz
Rabbi Yael Rooks Rapport

Teaching Assistants

Anika Cooper
Harold Levine
Sasha Soreff

Class Member Instructors

Adria Benjamin
Lise Brown
Harold Levine
Cantor Jacob Niemi
Ira Rosenblum
Dr. Randi Sarokoff

Guest Instructors

Rabbi Sharon Anisfeld Cohen
Rabbi Menachem Creditor
Niccolo Seligman

Musicians

Adria Benjamin
Cantor Jacob Niemi
Julia Ostrov
Judy Ribnick

The Big Read – Summer and Fall

Yael Bat-Chava, Hebrew Coaching
Donna Gray, Alef and Bet Class Coordination

Text Collation and Proofing

Megan Cossey
Betsey Immershein
Ira Rosenblum

Behind the Scenes Zoom Support

Tasha Calhoun
Emily Kanarek
Babette and Bruce Roberts

CELEBRATION OF PSALMS

Production Team

Anika Cooper – Video Recording
Sherri Felt Dratfield – Artistic Direction and Text
Editing
Harold Levine – Video Production

CBST Staff

Jesse Katz
Ruth Kleinman
Joyce Rosenzweig
Gina Schmeling

Broadcast/Streaming

Andy Austin
Better Events, Jason Zivic
Patrice Ruel

In memory of D'vorah Stoll and Jeffrey Weiss. *Zichronam l'vracha.*

SPONSORS

as of March 12, 2021

Randy Axelrod Thank you to Rabbi Kleinbaum, Harold Levine, Cantor Niemi, and my classmates for making psalms study a life changing experience.

Adria Benjamin With endless gratitude for all of the extraordinary teaching, led by Rabbi Kleinbaum, Rabbi Rapport, Harold Levine, Cantor Niemi, and each and every Psalms community classmate, for all of the CBST staff; for the support of family, friends and colleagues; and in memory of those no longer with us.

Ruthie Berman I am emotionally moved by the studying of the Psalms. Uplifted by the creative interpretations of the members. And learning from the passion with which Rabbi Kleinbaum shares her love and interest in interpreting the Hebrew. Kudos to Harold for keeping it all together with Anika Cooper. A hug for Cantor Jacob and his music.

Anika Cooper would like to acknowledge Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum, with profound appreciation for her wisdom, creativity and leadership - all with a sense of humor, kindness, and justice.

Working on this project has awarded me the privilege of being able to work with so many of you on a one to one basis. It was truly amazing connecting with each of you during this strange and difficult time in our world. Thank you.

With sincere and complete respect, admiration and gratitude I would like to thank my partners in this project, Sherri Felt Dratfield and Harold Levine. Working with you both has been a true pleasure. You are each gifted and brilliant in what you do and I deeply thank each of you for being so kind and easy to work with. Thank you both so much!

Carol Dickman Ruth and I want to thank the rabbis and staff for keeping our community together and enhancing our programs during this past year. I think CBST will emerge from the pandemic even stronger and more cohesive than before. Thanks again!

Sherri Felt Dratfield and Simon Dratfield With deep appreciation and gratitude to Rabbi Kleinbaum, Harold Levine, our classmates, and many others who have made this past year of psalm study a truly transformative experience.

Noreen Dean Dresser Thanks to Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum, Harold Levine, Anika Cooper, Sherri Felt Dratfield, and all classmates.

Stephen David Dym Thank you CBST for opening doors while we are locked-down. In praise of psalmists past, present, and future.

Alicia Fowler I am so grateful to have been welcomed in with open arms. A huge todah to this wonderful class and new friends.

Bonnie Fox This donation is made in honor of Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum and my dear friends Ira Rosenblum and Kenneth Karpel.

Kol Goodstein What could have been a time of isolation and fear has grown into a year of connection, loving community, and deepening Judaism which has sweetened my *goles* in more ways than I could have imagined possible. *A hartsikn dank.*

Donna Gray Psalms class has been my anchor during this crazy time. Much gratitude to RSK, Harold, Anika, and all the writers, artists and musicians. You inspire me every day. Thank you!

Barbara Grindell Who would think the ancient words of Psalms would resonate so I could write my own offerings. Rabbi Kleinbaum's love of Psalms comes through in her teaching and I have so learned so much.

Judith Hollander in gratitude for the myriad blessings that have emerged and continue to emanate from the Psalms Class.

Marcy Kahn This class has been a true blessing at a most difficult time for so many. Enormous thanks to Rabbi Kleinbaum for her leadership and scholarship, which have made this class so special. Thanks, too, to Board Member Harold Levine, class Teaching Assistant, for his generous participation, and to all who have shared with the class in so many different ways.

Katherine Keenan Many thanks to CBST, Rabbi Kleinbaum, Harold Levine and the entire staff and participants for a class that has enriched my life. I feel privileged to be part of it.

Beth Rosen and Maryann King With deep gratitude - we are so fortunate to be part of the CBST community!

Allison Klein What a year! Between the pandemic, the pundits, and the punks, without the outstanding programs provided by CBST it is unfathomable to me how I would have survived up until now! The Psalms class alone has been so profoundly moving, uplifting, agitating, depressing, gratifying and everything else I could have never imagined, in addition to being so engaging. Thank you CBST, I am mucho grateful for this community, Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum, our clergy and all my psalm-mates for being on this journey together. Who'da thought?

Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum in honor of my fabulous TA, Harold Levine, without whom this study of Psalms would have faltered so many times, Anika Cooper and Sherri Felt Dratfield who have worked so hard to make this celebration a success, Babette Roberts and Tasha Calhoun who provide tech support for all these many, many months of study, all the musicians and singers who have led us in and out with music for the soul, and the beautiful, deep, thoughtful, struggling, smart, funny, soulful, dedicated, hard working, and creative class members who have engaged in such deep study with me for all these many months. And in deepest gratitude to the Holy One who guides my path and leads me to seek the truth and beauty in creation every day.

Karen Krop What an amazing year of study and community! Who could have guessed when we gathered that first morning with Psalm 1 that Psalm 18 would be a year later? I look forward every day to our hour of connection, the music, the chevruta, the learning, the getting to know each other. I am so grateful and look forward to where we take this over the next year.

Laurie Krotman with deep gratitude to CBST and all those who make these classes possible. They give us comfort, solace and a tremendous sense of connection during these very disconnected times. We cannot thank you enough for all you are doing to create this extraordinary community.

Dorothy Leland and Linda Watskin in memory of Linda's grandmother, Yette Kline, a woman who lived a life filled with Tzedakah.

Cindy E. Levitz Expressing gratitude to Rabbi Kleinbaum, Harold, Anika, my fellow class participants, and the whole range of support staff and others. This class has kept me more sane and greatly enriched me during this past year. The support, knowledge, and friendship in our safe, nurturing space has been amazing! Thank you!

Regina Linder and Leah Trachten We are grateful to CBST for a community experience we could not have imagined.

Nina Luban Looking forward to this celebration of community, Judaism, art - and human spirit, which manages to keep us moving forward despite the odds. Rabbi Kleinbaum, Harold, Anika, Sherri - and all others who assisted in its creation - thank you!

Marsha Melnick With immense gratitude to Rabbi Kleinbaum and ALL the teachers and students for engaging in such a rewarding study of the Psalms this past year!

Debbie Metrick I want to thank everyone who participates in this meaningful class, which has motivated me to get in touch with my Jewish identity, and to learn and appreciate its history.

Jack Nieman Thank you Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum, and the inspirational CBST team who made Psalms class possible—expanding our knowledge with deep insightful commentary, music, and moving poetic offerings. Forever grateful.

Ruth Plave With gratitude to Rabbi Kleinbaum, Harold Levine, Anika Cooper, and the entire Psalms Class community for transforming this fearful year into an opportunity for creativity and human connection.

Julie Raynor With gratitude to Rabbi Kleinbaum and Harold Levine and the Psalms Class Members.

Joel Risch Our love to Linda and Bonnie and Ruthie.

Ira Rosenblum and Kenneth Karpel Being in the Psalms Class for the past year has been a privilege and a joy, and an anchor in a very stormy and challenging time. We are incredibly grateful to Rabbi Kleinbaum for the gift she's given us, to Harold Levine, our indefatigable TA, who makes sure everything runs like clockwork, and to our classmates, whose contributions have nourished and inspired us. Thank you to all!

Sally Kopstein and Lin Rosenbluth We are enormously grateful for Rabbi Kleinbaum's Psalms Class. Our lives have been enhanced by the consistently deep and meaningful teaching; honest sharing, and warm comradery that characterize this profound learning experience. Thank you everyone!

Dr. Randi A. Sarokoff and Mickey Dickenson During the isolation of the COVID-19 pandemic, through study of ancient text and creative expression, an intimate community was born. We increased holiness and light in the world while becoming more Jewish. With gratitude to Rabbi Kleinbaum, Harold, Anika, tech support, musicians, teachers, writers, artists, and classmates.

Alice Sayles So grateful to have this experience with such wonderful people. Thank you Rabbi Kleinbaum for inspiring leadership, and to Harold and Anika for a well run class!

Laurie Siegel Thank you, Rabbi Kleinbaum, for this community and for this opportunity to study together. It has truly been an inspirational experience.

Sarah Siegel in honor of Rabbi Kleinbaum, Harold Levine, Tasha Calhoun, Anika Cooper, Cantor Jacob Niemi, Julia Ostrov, Adria Benjamin, Ira Rosenbaum, Lise Brown, Sasha Soreff, and all of my classmates for the learning experience of a lifetime!

Sara Sloan with deep gratitude to all who make psalms class a wonderful, supportive and challenging start to the day.

Linda Solomon and Bonnie Siegel Congratulations to the Psalms Class and Rabbi Kleinbaum for guiding us through the Covid-19 quagmire. Being part of this journey has been a reminder of how community strengthens our lives.

Ann Targownik in support of the study of sacred text, learning from Rabbi Kleinbaum and students' questions, conversations, and enlightening interpretations.

Other Sponsors: Lawrence Bailis and Susan Shevitz, Ora Ezrachi, Carol Feinman, Erica Forman, Scott Soloway

DONORS

as of March 12, 2021

Robin Baslaw Our deep dive through the Psalms, during COVID and heartache, inspires and grounds me. The courage, fear, clarity, confusion, integrity and faith we share out loud opens me. Thank you.

Leslie Bernstein With thanks to Rabbi Kleinbaum and all who participate in the study of Psalms, to build bridges between David's world and ours.

Judith Frank CBST class opened my eyes to the many varieties of prayer in Tehillim, and I was brought back to writing poetry, inspired by my classmates' brilliant offerings. Most grateful. Thanks.

Joan Friedman in honor of the 97th birthday on March 9, 2021 of my mother, Cynthia R. Friedman.

Michael Greenwald A Triple Chai Mazel Tov to Linda Solomon with love!

Roberta Hand Thank you Rabbi Kleinbaum, Cantor Niemi, Harold Levine, and Anika Cooper for generously sharing your time and skills while providing us with the gift of our Psalms Class.

Marilyn Herrmann in honor of my dear friend, Randy Axelrod, and her dedication to her studies. I am so proud to be her friend.

Andrea Katz It has been a great honor to study and share with all the amazingly bright and creative people in the Psalms class.

Karen Kirschner in appreciation of the community.

Shari and Debbi A COVID year of Psalms with Rabbi Kleinbaum and CBST. All on Zoom, first from home in NYC then from home in Tel Aviv. We are so grateful.

Liz Kolodney and Barbara Sutton We are deeply grateful to Rabbi Kleinbaum and Harold for this remarkable class, and we send congratulations to all of tonight's inspiring participants.

Muriel Kudera I have found this Psalms class meaningful and comforting during this pandemic. Thank you so much!

Timothy Mueller Congratulations to Suzan Lipson and the entire class!

Ellen Poster Thanks to Rabbis Kleinbaum and Moskowitz, who help me find ways, different ways, to think about prayer that are challenging and nourishing. And to Harold Levine, who started me off.

Sue Rosansky and Joanna Asperger in memory of D'vorah Stoll and Jeffrey Weiss.

Bruce Klinger and Frank Shanbacker in honor of our dear friends Ken Karpel and Ira Rosenblum.

Deborah Siegel Baker honoring Sarah Ellin Siegel. תודה רבה!

Sara Sill To the Psalms Class: "Behold how good and how pleasing for people to sit [and study] together united."

Risë and Alan Stern in honor of Ira Rosenblum and Kenneth Karpel with love.

The Stan Moldovan Study Group: Laurie Krotman has received the Inaugural Lifetime Service Award from Women In Development (WID), for her notable commitment to WID's ideals and programs; and significant leadership in the philanthropic sector of our society and within the organization.

Shep Wahnnon I wish to express my appreciation for the amazing Psalms Class, a silver lining during this dark pandemic. And it will outlive the pandemic. By studying the Psalms I believe I have become a better Jew and better person. My gratitude goes to my classmates. Together we have made a difference.

Michele Zalkin in honor of Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum, the entire team, and the people in the class, so insightful, creative, and inspiring.

Saul L. Zalkin in gratitude to Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum for showing how the ancient Psalms may be an inspiration today.

Debra Zeitlin Thank you CBST and Rabbi Kleinbaum for all of your support during this past year.

Love to Linda and Bonnie from Dana and Jody!

Other Donors: Margo Cates, Corey Dane, Ruth Friedkin, Sherry Gelles, Michael Goldstein, Peter Klein, Marilyn Mishaan, Judy Papenfus, Jane Spielman

Gifts in honor of our Psalms Class keep CBST Joyful, Spiritual, Proud. Thank you to all our Sponsors and Donors. We are grateful for gifts made online at <https://cbst.org/givejoin> Thank you!