



Institute for Jewish Spirituality
The Prayer Project
Prayer as Practice

Online Course

Liberating the Voice: *Niggun* as Prayer

June 3 – 29, 2018

EVERYONE
WELCOME - NO
EXPERIENCE
NEEDED!

So many of us struggle with the language of Jewish prayer - Hebrew. Even if we feel comfortable with liturgical Hebrew, we may still feel overwhelmed by the sheer volume of words that characterizes Jewish prayer. Then there's the issue of holding back our free expression for fear of judgment or ridicule. In an effort to decode the prayers' meanings, "get it all done," and avoid shame, we may get stuck in the mind, losing our authentic connection to the heart, the body, and our spiritual core. The practice of *niggun* (wordless chant) can reawaken that connection and provide us with a strong base of powerful energy, intention, and presence to call upon as a companion - or alternative - to traditional Jewish prayer. During this four-week practice intensive, we will study the spiritual underpinnings of the practice of *niggun* through hasidic text. We will use what we learn to develop our capacity for receptively paying attention to the body and heart as we chant so that our vocal expression might flow freely and authentically from our inner lives. We will use attention and voice to cultivate heart-opening emotions such as awe, compassion, yearning, gratitude, and love. We will sing *niggunim* as both a companion to traditional Jewish prayer and a way into some of its words. No prior experience with Jewish prayer, singing, text study or mindfulness meditation is required.

<https://ijs.regfox.com/prayer-project-june-2018>



Aviva Chernick is a *Ba'alat Niggun* (*niggun* expert), award-winning musician, cantorial soloist, and mindfulness educator based in Toronto. For the past twelve years, she has served in and around Toronto and as a guest in communities across North America leading and teaching about the voice in prayer. Aviva has completed her training as a Mindfulness Meditation Teacher with the Institute for Jewish Spirituality and is the founder of two mindfulness programs in Toronto — the Mindfulness Minyan, and the sitting and singing community called neySHEV. Aviva facilitates adventures for freeing the voice at home in Toronto and with diverse communities while on her many travels.



Rabbi Sam Feinsmith has been immersed in the world of Jewish contemplative living, learning, and teaching for over fifteen years. Raised by a classical musician and composer, he composes devotional music and sacred chants as keys to open the heart to the Oneness of Being. He has conducted Jewish meditation workshops and retreats for seekers of all ages. He currently directs the Institute for Jewish Spirituality's Educating for a Jewish Spiritual Life pilot for Jewish day schools and summer camps and co-directs the Clergy Leadership Program. He lives in Evanston, Illinois, with his wife Sarah-Bess and his daughter Elanit Shefa.

This is an **online intensive course** that combines weekly learning, daily prayer, and connection with a virtual community of practice.