

Jeremy Gimbel

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Education

Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion, Los Angeles, CA

Rabbinic Ordination (expected in 2017)

Capstone: "TXTing the Text: Creating a Model For A New Translation of Torah"

Masters of Arts, Jewish Education (2015)

Masters Concentration in Israel Education (iCenter for Israel Education; 2015)

Masters of Arts, Hebrew Letters (2014)

University of California, Davis

BA Political Science (2008)

Minor: Religious Studies

Rabbinic & Community Leadership

Student Rabbi & Music Director - Congregation Kol Ami, West Hollywood, CA - 2013-present

Designed visual t'filah, enhanced social media, audio & video production. Wrote & delivered impassioned and impactful sermons. Regularly audited services to ensure meeting spiritual and practical goals. Developed an inclusive musical culture. Led & organized music for Shabbat, holiday, & High Holiday services. Organized & led adult retreat with lay leadership.

Rabbinic Intern - Congregation Beth Israel, San Diego, CA - 2016-present

Led Shabbat & B'nai Mitzvah services as a member of the clergy team. Led Shabbat Torah study. Led pre-school in weekly Havdalah. Taught 7th grade t'filah, 7th grade core (Ritual theory & Practice), Confirmation (Jewish Expressionism), High School elective (TXTing the Text).

Clinical Pastoral Education - Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, Los Angeles, CA - 2015

Leffell Israel Rabbinic Student Fellow & National Counsel Member - AIPAC - 2015-present

Rabbinic Cabinet - J Street - 2015-present

Student Rabbi - Temple Beth Israel, Redding, CA - 2012-2013

Part-time Rabbi in small Jewish community; led services, adult text study, holiday rituals, mentored two b'nai mitzvah students.

Summer Rabbinic Intern - Temple Akiba, Culver City, CA - 2012

Developed & designed new prayer book for monthly *Kabbalat Shabbat* service.

Youth Director, Head Song Leader, Educator - Congregation Beth Israel, San Diego, CA - 2008-2011

Increased participation in events by 30% while adding depth throughout three youth groups (grades 4-12). Developed youth leaders. Music leader & teacher for religious school t'filot, song sessions, and camp retreats (grades 3-7). Developed and implemented music curriculum & trained three youth song leaders. Taught core & elective classes in post-b'nai mitzvah program. Assisted in rebuilding 20-30s program.

Religious & Cultural VP - NFTY, North America - 2004-2005

Managed North American network of regional RCVPs. Served as Junior Faculty at URJ Kutz Camp.

Educational Leadership

Education Intern - Bureau of Jewish Education, Orange County, CA - 2014-2015

Designed & implemented "Young Philanthropy" high school program; 8th grade unit head at weekend retreats.

Rabbinic Student Intern - DeLeT (Day School Leadership through Teaching), HUC-JIR - 2014

Planned, mentored, & led *t'filot* for future Jewish Day School teachers; planned cumulative events/programs including paper & digital design.

Multi-modal Educator (K-12) - Temple Judea, Tarzana, CA - 2012-2014

Song leader, 6th grade Hebrew; 11-12th grade core, High School electives (TXTing the Text & Jewish Identity Through Film).

Musical Leadership

Song Leader "Tiny T'filah" - University Synagogue, Brentwood, CA - 2013-present

Engaged young families & deepened ties to the congregation through on-site & off-site Saturday morning program.

Featured Performer & Song Leader - URJ Biennial - 2007, 2009, 2013

Song Leader - Birkat Shalom on Kibbutz Gezer, Israel - 2011-2012

Led monthly program for special-needs youth along with community's Shabbat services.

Featured Song Leader - NFTY North American Convention - 2007

Song Leader (Head from '06-'08) - URJ Camp Newman - 2005-2008

Managed and led a staff that used Jewish music as an educational device in the setting of a thriving summer camp. Served as liaison between staff and camp faculty. Taught song leading and liturgy courses throughout the summer to high school age participants.

Cantorial Soloist - Northern California Synagogues - 2004-2008

Led music (and in the absence of the Rabbi, full services) for Shabbat and B'nai Mitzvah services, and synagogue retreats (Congregation Bet Haverim, Davis; Rodef Shalom, San Rafael; Temple Beth Israel, Fresno; Temple Or Shalom, Orangevale). Developed and implemented religious school music programs at Congregation Bet Haverim and Temple Or Shalom.

Publications

Film

"Hatikvah: A Documentary about One Aspect of Israel" - Producer, Director, Editor - 2015

Highlights the rich, nuanced, and vibrant conversation in Israel about their national anthem, structured as a model to for how to have a healthy, loving conversation about Israel. <https://youtu.be/VxbMQauPihs>

"The Book of Purim" - Producer, Director, Editor, Writer - 2015

Parody of the musical, "The Book of Mormon." Currently with over 100,000 YouTube views. <https://youtu.be/4Qozz7aIE64>

Israbel Films - Co-founder - 2008-present

Created, from concept to filming to finished product, videos for B'nai Mitzvah, weddings, anniversary & birthday parties, synagogue & corporate events, instructional, promotional, & creative videos.

<https://vimeo.com/user2858104/videos>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeal1JcWYiqdzHd7-LX5NeQ>

Print

Birkon Midash M'at: NFTY's Bencher (Editor). URJ Press, 2005. (print, ebook, app)

Compiled & edited the Reform Movement's first Bencher, a small book of prayers and blessings.

Web

Active blog on Times of Israel.

Sample articles: "Religious Schools are Not Immune - The Startling Low Rate of Vaccine Polices in Jewish Schools," "A Prayer of Gratitude for Marriage Equality," "The Tohu Vavohu of Gun Violence," & "The Rabbi Eats a Bacon Cheeseburger?" <http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/author/jeremy-gimbel/>

"How Do Israelis Feel About their National Anthem?"

The Forward, 7 Sept. 2016.

"Chaveirai n'vareich - Let's Praise Birkon Mikdash M'at: NFTY's Bencher."

10 Minutes of Torah. URJ Blog, 11 Nov. 2014.

"Adding Extras to Birkat Hamazon."

10 Minutes of Torah. URJ Blog, 24 Apr. 2005.

Featured Musician

"Salaam Achshav." On album **Ruach 5771**. Transcontinental Music, 2009.

Shiron L'gan: Jewish Songs for Children Ages 2-5. Transcontinental Music, 1997.

Original Jewish Music

Neshama Yetera - Additional Soul (2011 & 2013) Composer, lyricist, producer.

Let it Happen (2009) Composer, lyricist, producer.

Live @ Temple Or Rishon (2008) Composer, lyricist, producer.

A Blessing in Disguise.... (2006) Composer, lyricist, producer.

References available upon request

Jeremy Gimbel's Personal Statement

It all started with a choice. My rabbi stood with me in front of the ark on my Bar Mitzvah day and said, "Jeremy, you have a choice: you can be a rabbi or a cantor." That moment set me on a path that has led me to this moment: the beginning of my rabbinate. My rabbi could have said something kind but impersonal, true but cookie-cutter. Instead, he embodied the value of *hiddur mitzvah*, making a mitzvah beautiful. In everything I do — Torah study, a committee meeting, a holiday celebration, leading a service with ruach, facilitating a lifecycle moment — I strive to use *hiddur mitzvah* as a foundation, using creativity to inspire individuals to practice Judaism in a personally meaningful way.

I approach each moment of Jewish practice and teaching by asking myself three questions: "How can I use this moment to build community?" "What kind of moment does the community need?" and "How can this moment be built with intentionality and innovation while still respecting the community's traditions?" Each of these requires me to understand where the community is, affirm what is familiar and comforting, and work with my fellow clergy and lay partners to make each mitzvah and each moment beautiful.

I enjoy crafting meaningful, engaging, and joyful Jewish ritual experiences for those who seek to use Judaism to connect with their community and their individual spirituality. Through music, education, and the study of our tradition, I find great joy in guiding a community on a journey to enhance Jewish identities. This does not mean that every moment is joyful. Each of us encounters pain along life's journey that cannot be discarded or discounted. Indeed, some of the most beautiful moments in our tradition emerge from intense pain. Yet, whenever possible, I approach my Jewish practice and my rabbinate from a position of beautifying Judaism and its rich traditions by creating ways to live life joyfully and with gladness.

My role as a rabbi is to translate our tradition, teach it to this generation and the next, and apply it in both customary and innovative ways. When God spoke through Moses to tell the Israelites that the Torah is “not in the Heavens,” God implored us to translate, interpret, and use our tradition in ways that make it come alive. (Deut. 30:12) Whether through sermons incorporating visuals, creating new lifecycle rituals, or infusing secular music in a Jewish way, having this mindset gives me the opportunity to rethink how we enact rituals, engage spiritually, and beautifully live our Judaism.

The Talmud teaches, “*Da Lifnei Mi Atah Omed* - Know before Whom you stand.” (adapted from Talmud B’rachot 28b) While this passage in context refers to prayer, I believe it also applies to leadership and community building. The “whom” was intended to be God, but if we expand the “whom” to include whomever is in front of us, we discover its most resonant meaning. Knowing before whom I stand allows me to listen empathetically, communicate more soulfully, and lead more effectively. When I was learning to be a song leader at camp, this phrase was our mantra. Every decision we made, from song selection to setting to presentation style, flowed from understanding the “whom” we stood before. In communal leadership, knowing before whom I stand is paramount, guiding every decision I make, informed through the sacred relationship between clergy and community.

I see myself as a partner in developing and enacting the community’s vision so we all succeed. Keeping *hiddur mitzvah* as a guide reminds me that the ultimate purpose of beautifying a mitzvah is connecting a community to each other and to God. My job, as a rabbi, is to act as the conduit, helping to facilitate these connections for the community. At times this means leading the whole community in events, programs, and services. At other times, it means standing alone with a b’nai mitzvah student in front of the ark and saying, “You have a choice.”