

# **Whose Judaism Is It? Jewish Inheritance and Modern Judaism**

**A Weekend Seminar of**

**The International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism**

**Hosted by Kahal B'raira Congregation for Humanistic Judaism**

**with a Grant from the Society for Humanistic Judaism and Private Donations**

Jewish life today asks a crucial question: how can I be true to myself and celebrate my Jewish tradition? Our lifestyles and beliefs are very different from those of our ancestors, yet we find comfort and inspiration from claiming a shared (if evolving) culture. Each of us chooses from our cultural inheritance; the values and principles guiding our choices can create a renewed Jewish community.

## **Friday, November 20**

7:30 pm                      Balancing Continuity and Integrity

Some say Jewish words and perform Jewish rituals that do not reflect what they truly believe; they value continuity with their religious tradition more than clear integrity and consistency of beliefs and actions. Others are willing to lose some Jewish continuity to gain a clear and complete identity between what they think and what they say and do, between their Jewish and their human identities, between holidays and every day. That, too, is a Jewish tradition: Judaism has always changed in response to new challenges and new beliefs, trying to harmonize what Jews now believe with how they celebrate their Jewish identity.

## **Saturday, November 21**

9:00am-Noon                The Importance of Words: Literature, Song and Celebration

What do we mean by words like “tradition,” “religion,” “God” and “Judaism”? How do the challenges of continuity and integrity play out in reading the Bible and Jewish literature, and in the celebration of Jewish culture, holidays and community?

1pm-4:00pm            The Importance of Deeds: Ethics, Symbol and Ceremony

For us, the word “*mitzvah*” has much more meaning as “good deed” than as “divine commandment.” And symbolic clothing, rituals and behavior can speak to both family tradition and personal belief. How can we approach traditional Jewish culture in ways that honor both past and present?

6:00 – 8:30            Havdallah Service/ Community Potluck

Please join Seminar participants and KB members for a pleasant end to the day.

### **Sunday November 22**

9:00am-11:00am      The Importance of Ideas: Belief, Tradition and Truth

Jews have held vastly different beliefs over the many centuries of their cultural evolution. Despite some claims to the contrary, ours has been a tradition of both deed and creed. What do we share with our ancestors’ theology, and where do our beliefs point to new truths about the human experience?

11:00am-Noon        Herding Katzes: Creating Jewish Community from Jewish Diversity

(KB adult meeting)

The familiar proverb claims “2 Jews, 3 Opinions” – how can they create one community? And if that is the case for Jews in general, how much more so for Humanistic Jewish families who come from many backgrounds and whose autonomy is much valued? The truth is that what could drive us apart can also bring us together.

### **LOCATION**

All events will take place at 765 Concord Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138

Hotel and In-Home accommodations available. Please inquire.