

MUSSAR KALLAH VII

At the Valley of the Sun JCC in Scottsdale

October 25, 2009

TEACHER BIOS

Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein is the Director of Interfaith Affairs for the Simon Wiesenthal Center. He holds the Sydney M Irmas Adjunct Chair in Jewish Law and Ethics at Loyola Law School, and teaches at Yeshiva University High Schools in Los Angeles. He is a co-principal in Jewish Mediation Service, which applies a Jewish ethical approach to problem solving. He is a contributing editor to the quarterly *Jewish Action*, as well as its regular computer columnist. Dozens of his essays have appeared in Jewish and general printed and electronic media. Rabbi Adlerstein received his ordination from the Chofetz Chaim yeshiva in New York. He is a *summa cum laude* graduate of Queens College, and a member of Phi Beta Kappa. He has lived in LA for over three decades with his wife Reena. They have eight children, and a great start on the generation after.

Dr. Shirah Bell co-leads Mussar programs with Dr. Alan Morinis. She is also a certified spiritual director and guides individuals and groups to find meaning in their lives, make important choices, and develop self-healing practices. Shirah was raised in a culturally Jewish but non-observant home. About 22 years ago she began to reclaim her Jewish heritage and has been studying Mussar, Hebrew, and Torah intently. Shirah's early career was in organizational development and strategic planning (Ph.D. Stanford), which gave her a deep grounding in teaching and leading groups and developing curricula in non-traditional settings. She has written articles on listening, anxiety, and money which are posted on her website www.livingwealth.com.

Rabbi Micha Berger is a father and husband, and sees in those roles much of the expression of his Judaism – and his Mussar work. He was a student of Rav Dovid Lifshitz, the Suvalker Rav, at Yeshivas Rabbeinu Yitzchak Elchanan (a YU affiliate). From this contact, Rabbi Berger took away a dream to infuse his Jewish practice with the blend of love, Mussar and Jewish thought that marked Rav Dovid's Torah practice. To that end, he joined The Mussar Institute's board, and is proud of having participated in every Kallah to date. He also established the AishDas Society, a community of Orthodox Jews using Mussar's and other tools to create a synthesis of the "*aish*," the fire of inspiration and faith, with the "*das*" of halachic observance, to create a Judaism that both fully is and yet is greater than either of the parts. He is also a computer programmer in the financial industry.

Rabbi Avi Fertig is the author of "Bridging the Gap" (Feldheim 2007), a comprehensive guide to important Mussar concepts and Mussar lessons from the Talmud as well as the classical works of the modern Mussar movement. The book is based on talks given by Rabbi Reuvain Leuchter, a foremost student of Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe. Rabbi Fertig was born in the United States and for the past 12 years has resided in Israel. He studied at the Ner Yisrael Yeshiva in Baltimore and has also learned and taught at Yeshiva Neve Zion and the Mir Yeshiva of Jerusalem. He is currently a rebbe and teacher at Yeshivat

Reishit, in Beit Shemesh, Israel.

Josh Gressel, Ph.D., is a psychologist in private practice in Pleasant Hill, CA. His passions are marriage counseling from a spiritual perspective and working with religious adults on psychological issues so they can worship God more fully. He is a long-time Mussar student and for the past three years has been researching and writing a book on envy.

Rabbi Zvi Holland hails from Scranton, PA. Educated in the U.S. and Israel, Rabbi Holland was ordained by the Mir Yeshiva in Jerusalem. He is Dean at Phoenix Community Kollel where he is dedicated to promoting Torah study and building community. Rabbi Holland has an infectious personality, an intelligent style, and a delicious recipe for every occasion. He and his wife Sima maintain a brood of exclusively red-headed children in an environment of frenetic enthusiasm and well-fed guests.

Rabbi David Jaffe is the founder and dean of the Kirva Institute for Torah and Spiritual Practice and an instructor of Rabbinics at Gann Academy: The New Jewish High School in Waltham, MA. He teaches widely in the Boston Jewish community and is a board member of The Mussar Institute. A graduate of Columbia University School of Social Work, he studied at Yeshivat Darchei Noam and received smicha from Yeshivat Bat Ayin in Israel. Rabbi Jaffe is committed to making Mussar and related spiritual practices accessible to Jews of all backgrounds.

Rebbetzin Rivy Poupko Kletenik is a Jewish American female lecturer and educator. She was born in Pittsburgh, PA to Gilda Twerski Novoseller Poupko, scion of the great Hasidic dynasty and Rabbi Baruch Poupko, rabbi for over 60 years of Congregation Shaare Torah in Pittsburgh. Mrs. Kletenik is Head of School at the Seattle Hebrew Academy. She was presented with the American Jewish Press Association first prize award for commentary in 2001 and writes a monthly column for Seattle's JTNews called JQ. Rivy teaches and lectures throughout the community and nationwide on all things Jewish. She was awarded the 2002 Covenant Award for Exceptional Jewish Educator, was honored as Distinguished Alumna at Touro College, and was the 2006 Seattle Hadassah Honoree. Rivy is the wife of Rabbi Moshe Kletenik, national President of the Rabbinical Council of America and mother of four children and three grandchildren.

Robert Mass lives in Pleasantville, NY. He is married to Anne, a physician and his wife of 25 years, and has three children Daniela (22), Benjamin (16) and Emily (15). He is a lawyer by training, was in law enforcement for many years and now works in finance. He is a member of the Pleasantville Community Synagogue—a non-denominational liberal synagogue—and a lay prayer leader of a chavurah in his community. He has studied and taught Mussar for four years, has a regular Mussar practice and is currently a member of the Board of Directors of The Mussar Institute.

Dr. Alan Morinis is an anthropologist, filmmaker, writer, and student of spiritual traditions. Born and raised in a culturally Jewish but non-observant home, he studied

anthropology at Oxford University on a Rhodes Scholarship. His doctoral thesis was published by Oxford University Press as *Pilgrimage in the Hindu Tradition*. He has written books and produced feature films, television dramas and documentaries and has taught at several universities. For the past twelve years the nearly-lost Jewish spiritual discipline of Mussar has been his passion, a journey recorded in the book *Climbing Jacob's Ladder* (Broadway 2002). He is also the author of *Everyday Holiness: the Jewish Spiritual Path of Mussar* (Trumpeter 2007) and is an active interpreter of the teachings and practices of the Mussar tradition and regularly gives lectures and workshops. In 2004, Dr. Morinis founded The Mussar Institute to increase the availability of Mussar teachings and practices in this generation.

Rabbi Ariel Shoshan serves the Arizona Jewish community as the Rav of Ahavas Torah: The Scottsdale Torah Center and as a Halacha instructor at Shearim Torah High School for Girls. As Director of the Phoenix Community Kollel from 2002-2007, Rabbi Shoshan has taught Mussar vaadim to executives of all ages for the last seven years. He is a native of Chicago, holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Maryland, and was ordained by Ner Israel Rabbinical College in Baltimore. He is certified as a Teacher of Hebrew Language & Literature by Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and is a member of the Conference of Synagogue Rabbonim of Agudath Israel of America.

Modya Silver, an Under-Constructionist Jew, lives in Toronto. Having spent 12 years in a Buddhist community, while still maintaining an observant Jewish practice, Modya found his way back to Jewish learning about 7 years ago and now marches solely down the path of his rich, birth tradition. Along the path, Modya stumbled upon Mussar and has since been blessed with wonderful teachers and fellow travelers. In addition to a challenging Marketing career in High Tech, Modya teaches Mussar classes at various shuls around Toronto, is a member of the board of The Mussar Institute and is about to launch a Web 2.0 Internet-based Jewish community to support daily practice of character trait development. Most importantly, Modya loves to hang out with his wife and four children.