

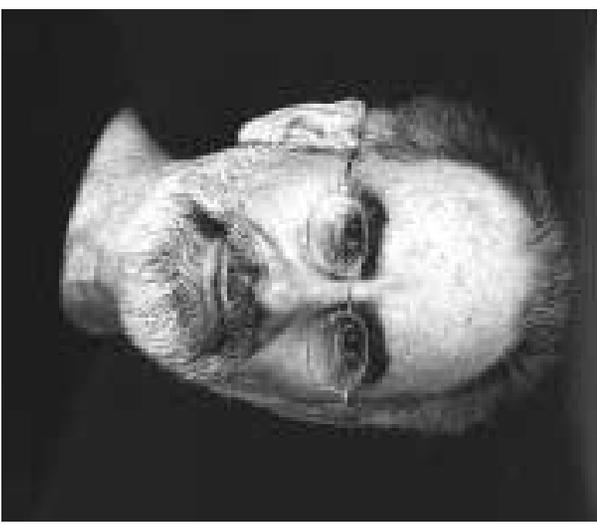
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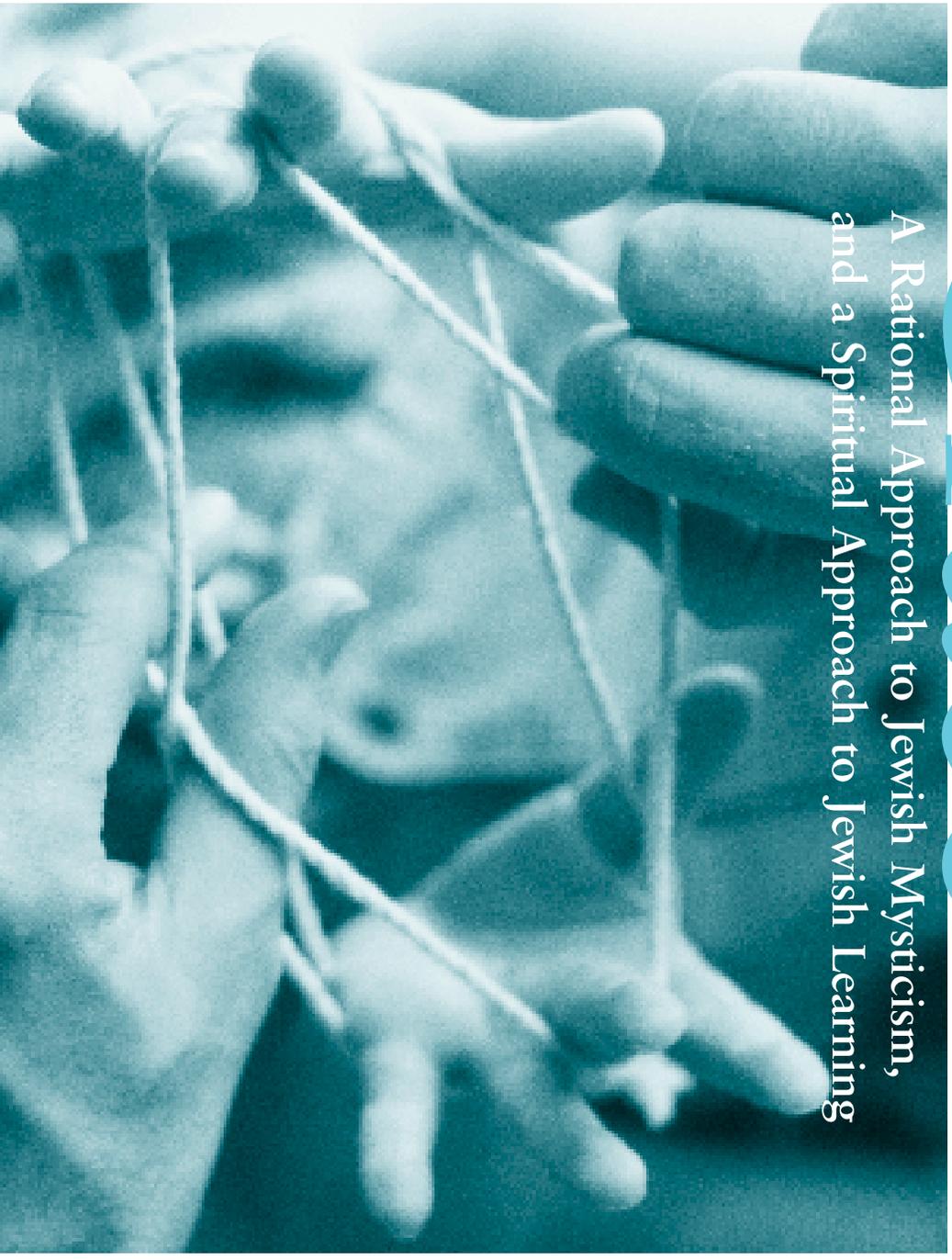
*When does
Jewish life
imitate a
mystery
thriller?*

*Invite Mitchell Chefitz to share
his stories, his teachings, and
his delight!*



Teachings With Grace

A Rational Approach to Jewish Mysticism,
and a Spiritual Approach to Jewish Learning



Teaching With Grace

Lecture Topics

The Evolution of Jewish Spirituality

Spirituality is expressed not only through prayer and meditative practice, but also through religious practice and the activities of daily living. There have been quantum jumps in the evolution of spirituality throughout Jewish history. We are in the process of such a jump in our time.

If They're Not Prophets, They're the Children of Prophets

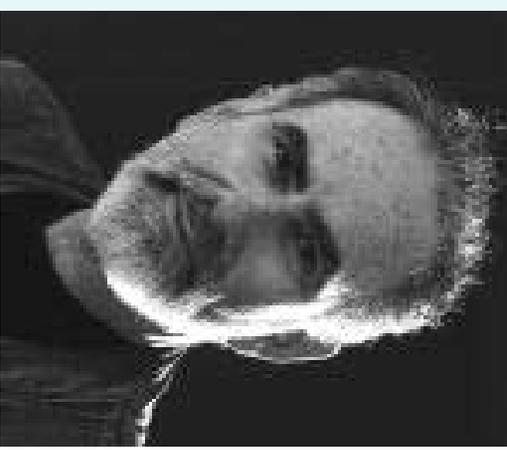
The Thirty-third Hour, a mystery thriller, demonstrates as only good storytelling can how solving the mysteries of one's inner life can also help us make sense of the Torah. In The Thirty-third Hour Mitch Chefitz summarizes some of the best learning discoveries of a generation of experiments in independent havrut and other non-denominational sources. He shows in vivid life experiences, how they can be integrated into conventional religious institutions with profound effect. Working from the premise that Torah is vibrant and dynamic, Mitch introduces the age-old Bible stories into the fabric of a suspense novel. Unraveling the mysteries of Abraham and Sarah, Moses and Miriam is the key to the surprise ending in the book -- and the ultimate insights to be discovered and rediscovered in each study session. In his presentation, Rabbi Chefitz demonstrates a style of Torah teaching that uncovers the mystery in each text through interacting with the inner mysteries of each person who is present in the class.

The Novel as Spiritual Discipline

The Hasidim, from the Baal Shem Tov on, have used storytelling as a form of transmitting and reinforcing spiritual wisdom. When one expands that technique to the novel, what happens to the novelist – and to the reader?

A Kabbalah Intensive

A full weekend of learning and practice customized to the needs of the congregation. Jewish history will be 'reframed' as an experience of continual renewal. Text study will touch upon Sinai, Ezekiel, the generation of Akiba, Luria, and speculation about developments in our-time. Talmudic style discovery learning will be combined with meditation and prayer.



"When Rabbi Mitch Chefitz came to Beth David, Bar Mitzvah class kids who heard him last year insisted that they be allowed back a second time. They loved him, as did their parents and grandparents! We should all learn Torah with teachers like Mitch Chefitz!"

Rabbi Mel Glazer
Congregation Beth David,
Miami

Mitchell Cheftz burst onto the Jewish scene some 25 years ago teaching kabbalah and creating havurot first within a congregational setting, and then beyond denominational boundaries, leading the Havurah of South Florida to become among the largest and the most dynamic independent havurot in the world.

Innovation in the Mainstream

Mitch has recently become the rabbi of Temple Israel of Greater Miami, one of the oldest congregations in the South. He's filling a huge building in an aging downtown neighborhood with interactive Jewish learning, opening pages of Talmud and spiritual texts in an environment where they had never been studied before, drawing large numbers to a full spectrum of religious services, instituting a system of family learning new to congregational life.

Power in Storytelling

Mitch has woven his innovative work into a fabric of stories that teach the joy of learning Torah within a caring community while conveying the framework of the kabbalah with a gentle hand. Mitch's teaching is similar to the flow of his novels. Through stories old and new he shares the joy of Jewish spiritual life allowing each student the thrill of self-discovery and accomplishment.

Living With Grace

Mitch balances the rational with the mystical, and is as likely to open a page of Talmud as a teaching of one of the hasidic masters. "We have to make both available," he says. "Together they create balance and confidence, a foundation upon which we can build toward an enriched expression of Judaism, much as the rabbis and spiritual masters of the past built upon previous foundations."

"...the most profound, uplifting, and moving davening I have ever experienced. Through kavannot, meditations, history, and insights, Mitch draws out the deep richness of Jewish prayer."

Mia Buchwald Gelles
Beth El-The Heights Synagogue,
Cleveland

Reaching for Grace

How To Live Judaism as a Spiritual Thriller with a Happy Ending

Rabbi Mitchell Chefitz is in the spiritual storytelling business. His quest is to bring his students into the story. “A good part of the Jewish story has already been written. We can’t leave it out. But we’re also part of the story, and we can’t leave ourselves out. My novels are a direct extension of my teaching. Each reader, each student, becomes a living expression of the Torah experience.”

“I tried writing non-fiction, but it just didn’t have the life force, the energy of a real study session. I could convey the information, but not the intuition; the rational, but not the mystique.” For Chefitz, life, like fiction, requires a delicate balance between reason and spirit. Chefitz’s novels are rationally sound but carry the reader beyond ordinary boundaries.

Chefitz stepped into the world of the kabbalah during his training for the Reform rabbinate at the Hebrew Union College in New York in the 70’s. “I wondered how the early rabbis made the transition from animal sacrifice to prayer.” That curiosity led him to the writings of the early mystics. He speculated that the very scholars who were transforming Jewish practice with the development of the Talmud were also transforming Jewish spiritual life. In his first novel, *The Seventh Telling: The Kabbalah of Moshe Katan*, Chefitz borrows from the stories of his teachers, Zalman Schacter-Shalomi and Shlomo Carlebach, and adds stories of his own as he wrestles with a Jewish renewal in process, imagining a new epoch of Jewry, new in spirit and practice.

“A few generations after every major trauma we have had a rebirth of Jewish spirit and practice,” Chefitz says. “After the destruction of the first temple we had Ezekiel and Isaiah. After the destruction of the second Temple, the generation of Rabbi Akiba – the Mishnah



I chose to write novels because the story is still being told. We are intertwined in the end result of our moments. I chose to write in the place where so many are writing their spiritual novels because we can engage with their Judaism.



Living

and the evolution of the prayer service. After the expulsion from Spain, Luria and the Shulhan Aruch. Now we are a few generations after the Holocaust.

“What we develop now in both Jewish spirit and practice will be dramatic. New stories – both love stories and thrillers – to describe our renewed relationship with the Divine. Stories that emanate from our life experience and resonate throughout our lives.”

Living the Novel

In *The Thirty-third Hour*, the second novel of his trilogy, Mitch prefigures his own career. After completing his book tour, Mitch left the ‘fringes’ of Jewish life to enter the center of the mainstream, returning to the synagogue as senior rabbi after an absence of more than two decades.

“It’s one thing to write about a havurah-style rabbi in a conventional pulpit,” he says, “and another to live it. I suggested in the novel it could be done. As I wrote the book, I hoped that it would be possible for a rabbi in a liberal congregation to set a spiritual tone, to teach from the deepest of texts – both from the Talmud and the kabbalah. I envisioned that we could create enthusiasm and energy in Judaism for grown-ups that would speak to their deepest spiritual needs.”

How has it been going? “So far, so good,” he says.

Attendance at evening classes averages close to 100 – and this in a downtown location. During his Friday evening sermon Mitch makes mention of texts from various sources. On Saturday, before the morning service, students gather to continue the learning introduced the night before. On Sunday morning, there is often a Family Bayt Midrash – small groups of adults and children – learning together, much as described in the novel. “We’re creating a knowledgeable community and attracting Jews from all denominations to learn together. The intensity of the learning and the excitement is similar to what I experienced in the havurah. All that’s different is a matter of scale. We’re attracting a larger and more diverse community to the synagogue.”

*Is because the Jewish
1. Teller and reader
tale. I don't know
new Jewish experi-
te novels because this
many people are find-
bination. I chose to
I want my audience to
aism, not just watch.*

Books by Mitchell Chefitz

The Seventh Telling: The Kabbalah of Moshe Katan
The Seventh Telling uses the age-old device of storytelling to make the inner workings of the Kabbalah accessible, and speculates about further developments, especially the contribution women are likely to make. It has already become a best seller.

Reading *The Seventh Telling* moves one between

“I’ve done many kinds of meditative practices. Mitch’s approach brings me not only personal peace and serenity, but a deep Jewish connection. He’s helped me understand the difference between ‘plain’ meditation and Jewish meditation.”

Andrea Stone,
Film Producer, Los Angeles

worlds in the way only a novel can, challenging the heart, mind, and soul all at once. In a marathon storytelling session conducted by students of a modern-day Jewish spiritual master, we learn the life stories of the master, and the still deeper stories of the students. But the deepest stories are those not revealed in the book. They become manifest in the heart of each reader as she or he penetrates deeper and deeper into the worlds of the Kabbalah.

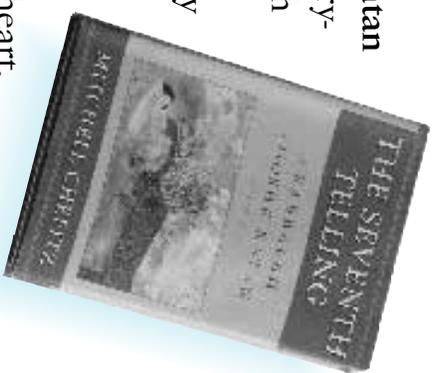
For current reviews and more info check out www.MitchellChefitz.com

The Thirty - Third Hour

Mitch’s new book, *The Thirty-third Hour*, is a spiritual mystery centered about congregational life. A conventional rabbi has thirty-three hours to view the tapes of an experimental family education program in an attempt to save a colleague from what is likely to be a devastating sex ethics charge. The rabbi is transformed in the process. It is the first time anyone has included a complete curriculum of family education within the plot of a mystery thriller. Learning Torah becomes effortless as we turn the pages to discover the secret that the Torah study has uncovered.

“Mitch is such a master educator, we want to use all his techniques. We’re making ‘Moshe Katan’s’ study sessions found in the The Thirty Third Hour a part of our Hebrew school curriculum. We think this novel also contains the best family education program we’ve ever seen.”

Peter Ecstein, Director of Education
Temple Israel, West Palm Beach



Bringing Havurah learning into Congregational Life

Jewish experiments that are working

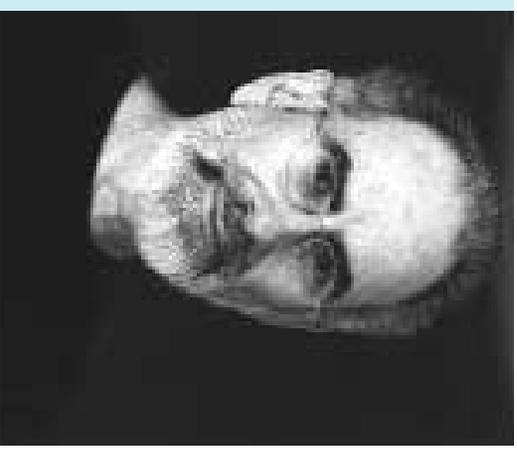
- The power of **niggunim** (chanting) in prayer services
- Meditative practices from **uniquely Jewish sources**
- A spiritual history of the Jewish people – a **positive** perspective
- **Hevruta** discovery learning of Biblical and Rabbinic texts
- Rethinking the role of the rabbi – **rabbi as coach**
- Setting sail into the sea of **Talmud**
- Finding **light** in the darkest of situations
- Unlocking texts of the Hasidic masters
- **Teaching children and adults** together - Making the potential energy between Jewish generations **kinetic**

Learn how to mine 25 years of successful havurah programs: **Invite**

Mitch Chefitz to your community.

Call 866-764-7452 or email NamaF@aol.com

For years Mitch has been traveling to communities, leaving behind stories, teachings, deep insight into the prayer service, and new systems of family learning. Even while completing his third novel and serving Temple Israel as rabbi, he is eager to visit new cities, to share, to teach, to learn.



Fees and Schedules

Mitch is available **THIS YEAR ONLY** on selected weekends as a scholar in residence for \$3,000. He is much more available on Sundays and weekdays for a fee of \$1,500 per lecture. Transportation and hotel will be paid by the sponsor. Mitch will make himself available to discuss all aspects of programming with the Education Committee, Ritual Committee, etc. We encourage cooperative programming and will assist with matchmaking.