

Edmonton Beit Midrash:
A Shared Local Learning Space to Contend with Anti-Semitism and Racism

At a time of extreme social polarization, the Edmonton Beit Midrash seeks to strengthen Edmonton's Jewish community by creating a Jewish space of active, shared introspection to contend with antisemitism and racism. As a Beit Midrash (בית מדרש) our program fosters an active space of learning, drawing the connections between contemporary forms of antisemitism and racism, exploring Jewish perspectives on antiracism discourse and work, and facilitating honest conversations about antisemitism and racism toward as well as *within* our local communities.

We invite you — members of Edmonton's Jewish community — to rally around a topic that might push us apart but can also bring us together. Our Beit Midrash is open to Jewish people of all affiliations, genders, and backgrounds, gathering in a space committed to understanding that while racial justice work can be difficult, it is work we must do together, starting with opening conversations we need to have within our community.

On Sept. 22, 2021 (7:30-9:00 pm) we invite you as Ushpizin (אושפיזין) into our Sukkat Shalom (סוכת שלום). In other words, in this informational session occurring during the high holiday of Sukkot, we welcome you as members of our peace-seeking gathering space. To ensure the safety of all members in our community, **the Sukkat Shalom information session and all following events will be held virtually via zoom.**

Following the informational session, **we will host a series of three workshops throughout the month of Cheshvan (on Wednesdays Oct. 6, Oct. 20, Nov. 3 from 7:00 to 8:00pm).** The workshop series will allow us to come together and open conversations that may certainly be difficult, but ones we must openly engage with in order to come together and strengthen our community.

The program will **conclude with a Menorat Shalom (מנורת שלום) event on Wednesday, November 17 (7:00-8:00pm).** This panel gathering, guided by the light and spirit of the Hanukiah (חנוכיה), will consider what we have learned in the workshop series and the next stages of the project (from the establishment of equitable anti-racism partnerships within our community as well as with other local communities, and a movement from shared reflection to communal action).

The workshop series is the first stage in a larger project. In this current step, our Beit Midrash opens a space for active, communal introspection committed to exploring racism and antisemitism in Edmonton today. Phase two of our project will turn to widening our circles, to form equitable and sustainable relationships with local communities who experience and contend with racism in Edmonton. The third and final step of our work will move us from a space of learning to communal acting, working together (within our community and with other local groups) to address the issues we have been exploring, and together, effect change in our city.

If you'd like to learn more about the project — join us for an information session by registering [here](#). If you have any questions about the project, please contact Jeni Adler (community@jfse.org).

Warmly,

Jeni Adler, Jeremiah Levine, Meital Siva-Jain, Orly Lael Netzer, Rita Motta Martinez and Rabbi Gila Caine