

KENISSA

COMMUNITIES OF MEANING NETWORK

Third National Consultation

March 4-6, 2018

Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center

Falls Village, CT

Co-Sponsoring Organizations:



***Kenissa* is funded by The William Davidson Foundation
and is fiscally sponsored by Hazon**



Rationale

American Jewish life is in a time of transition that calls for bold, new thinking and the development of new models for identification. Membership and affiliation patterns that have sustained synagogues and other legacy Jewish institutions for more than a century are eroding. At the same time, we see a dramatic growth of interest and energy in new expressions of Jewish community. Some are focused on learning; some are focused on social justice; some are focused on contemplative practice and spirituality; some are focused on food and environmental sustainability; some are focused on prayer. Some look like synagogues; some do not. Each sector has seen one or more organizations emerge that have either seeded the phenomenon or have created a network to sustain and support the phenomenon.

Defining “Communities of Meaning”

What the sectors have in common is that they employ a particular idiom unique to contemporary American culture that attracts other Jews with similar interests. The richness of the Jewish heritage is literally being re-invented in our time by the way in which Jewish wisdom is being applied to the challenges that confront our world today. If properly nurtured and encouraged, these “communities of meaning” can form the nucleus of an American Jewish renaissance. Communities of meaning are networks of individuals that are inspired by ideas or practices that enrich the lives of participants and/or significantly improve conditions in the world for others.

Using the Hebrew word for “portal” or “entranceway”, the *Kenissa* Network brings together the people leading contemporary efforts to re-define Jewish life and community so that they can learn from each other and be supported in their efforts to create communities of meaning.

Program

- At annual Consultations every March, *Kenissa* convenes 50+ individuals whose work reflects innovative approaches to Jewish life. Participants benefit from seeing their particular endeavors in the context of a changing socio-political landscape and a rapidly changing Jewish community. Significant thinkers and practitioners beyond the Jewish world also enrich and broaden our conversation.
- Our website hosts a weekly [blog](#), providing thought leadership for this emerging trend.
- Every December, *Kenissa*'s national “Cross-Training” taps into the expertise of members of the Network. Any *Kenissa* Consultation participant can bring a team from their organization to this capacity building gathering.
- Network members may also participate in one or more Communities of Practice ranging from sustainability to organizational culture.
- *Kenissa*'s most ambitious project is to create a national database of communities of meaning in American Jewish life. Individuals who would like to have their projects listed should fill out this [form](#).

[Kenissa](#) is an independent project housed at Hazon and is led by Rabbi Sid Schwarz, the founder of several cutting edge Jewish organizations and initiatives and the author of, among other books, *Jewish Megatrends: Charting the Course of the American Jewish Community*. Co-sponsors of the Initiative are the Institute for Jewish Spirituality, JOIN for Justice, Mechon Hadar and UpStart. Over the course of the next five years we intend to build and collect a body of knowledge and broaden the universe of participants. It will eventually incorporate thinkers and practitioners from other faith communities in America. The *Kenissa: Communities of Meaning Network* is being supported by lead funding from The William Davidson Foundation.

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Program Goals:

As a result of participating in the Consultation you will:

1. Feel that your connection to the growing *Kenissa* Network will support collaboration, learning, and growth in your work and organization over the long term.
2. Understand key themes that are central to emerging Jewish communities of meaning and explore how these themes might relate to your work.
3. Contextualize your work within larger social trends in American society and the Jewish community and explore similarities and differences in your work with other *Kenissa* participants.

Sunday, March 4

Sunday sessions located in the Library

4 – 4:40 pm	OPENING: WELCOME AND GROUNDING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Participants understand the overall purpose and outcomes of Consultation, and are introduced to Venn Diagram</i>
4:40 – 6pm	CONNECTING: SHARING OUR STORIES, part 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Group begins relationship-building through reflections on leadership and hopes for gathering. We begin to see the range of the landscape through individual stories and themes.</i>
6 – 7:30 pm	DINNER
7:30 – 8:30 pm	CONNECTING: SHARING OUR STORIES, part 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Group continues relationship-building through reflections on leadership and hopes for gathering. We begin to see the range of the landscape through individual stories and themes.</i>
8:30 – 9:00 pm	CONNECTING: THEMES & PATTERNS FROM ESSAY 2 facilitated by Hadar Cohen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>We will reflect on the range of responses reflected in the participant essays in response to the themes raised in Jewish Megatrends.</i>
9:00 – 9:15 pm	CLOSING THE DAY

Monday, March 5

- *All sessions in the synagogue, unless otherwise noted.*

<p>7:00 am</p>	<p>MORNING SPIRITUAL GATHERING <i>Two concurrent options:</i></p> <p>A Personal and Communal Experience of <i>Echad</i> - Going Deeply into the Shema: Rabbi Robin Damsky <u><i>In the Library</i></u> Fusing nature's sounds with our own we will explore and express our Divine unity with all things.</p> <p>Traditional <i>Shacharit</i>: Bob Goldfarb and Naomi Malka <u><i>In the Synagogue</i></u></p>
<p>8 am</p>	<p>BREAKFAST</p>
<p>9:00 – 10:15 am</p>	<p>KENISSA: WHAT’S THE BIG IDEA? Rabbi Sid Schwarz</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>We will learn about some of the trends and ideas that inform the Kenissa Network—why it matters and how it can support your work and organization.</i>
<p>10:15 – 10:45 am</p>	<p>BREAK</p>
<p>10:45 – 12:00 pm</p>	<p>PEER RESOURCE SESSIONS: 3 Concurrent Options</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Through peer-sharing, we will learn, reflect and offer ideas on our organizations’ strengths and challenges.</i> • <u>Jewish Learning</u> in the Great Hall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facilitator: Irene Lehrer Sandalow, SketchPad ○ Presenters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dr. Barbara Gereboff, Wornick Jewish Day School ▪ Steffi Aronson Karp, Limmud Boston • <u>Social Justice</u> in the Library <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facilitator: Jared Jackson, Jews in All Hues ○ Presenters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rabbi Dev Noily, Kehilla Community Synagogue ▪ Craig Taubman, Pico Union Project • <u>Spiritual Practice</u> in the Sun Room <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facilitator: Rabbi Guy Austrian, Fort Tryon Jewish Center ○ Presenters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ruth Schapira, Mussar Institute ▪ Rabbi Dana Saroken, The Soul Center

Noon – 1 pm	LUNCH
1pm – 2:15 pm	<p>PEER RESOURCE SESSIONS: 3 Concurrent Options</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Through peer-sharing, we will learn, reflect and offer ideas on our organizations' strengths and challenges.</i> • <u>Spiritual Community</u> in the Great Hall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facilitator: Rabbi Jan Salzman, Ruach HaMaqom ○ Presenters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rabbi Aaron Levy, Makom ▪ Rabbi Jen Gubitz, The Riverway Project at Temple Israel of Boston • <u>Eco-Sustainability/Food Justice</u> in the Library <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facilitator: Jeffrey Cohan, Jewish Veg ○ Presenters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kohenet Stacey Sephirah Oshkello, Living Tree Alliance ▪ Leora Mallach, Beantown Jewish Gardens • <u>Art and Culture</u> in the Sun Room <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facilitator: Deborah Fishman, FED ○ Presenters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jon Adam Ross, The In[heir]itance Project ▪ Misha Shulman, School for Creative Judaism
2:15 – 2:45 pm	BREAK
2:45 – 4:30 pm	<p>HOW WE GATHER</p> <p><i>Presentation from Reverend Jennifer Bailey, Executive Director of Faith Matters, about new forms of community and spirituality on the American social landscape</i></p>
4:30 – 5:00 pm	<p>PLAYING WITH VENN</p> <p><i>We will create a collective map of our work using the Venn Diagram, and experiment with the creation of our own diagrams.</i></p>
5:00 – 5:30 pm	<p>MINCHAH/SOUL BREAK <i>Two concurrent options</i></p> <p>Rest and Reset: Kohenet Annie Matan (Library) Find more space in your day with chanting, intention (re)setting, time to breathe more deeply and to let go more completely in a sweet and brave space within our community. Bring some <i>menucha</i> (rest) into your <i>mincha</i>.</p> <p>Mindfulness and Meditation Outdoors: Rabbi Katy Allen (Great Hall) Allow nuggets of Jewish wisdom paired with quiet observational exercises to calm your spirit and open your being to the amazing wonder and the healing power in the out-of-doors. We'll walk slowly, with stops along the way for guided interaction with the natural world and time for personal meditation, prayer, or observation.</p>

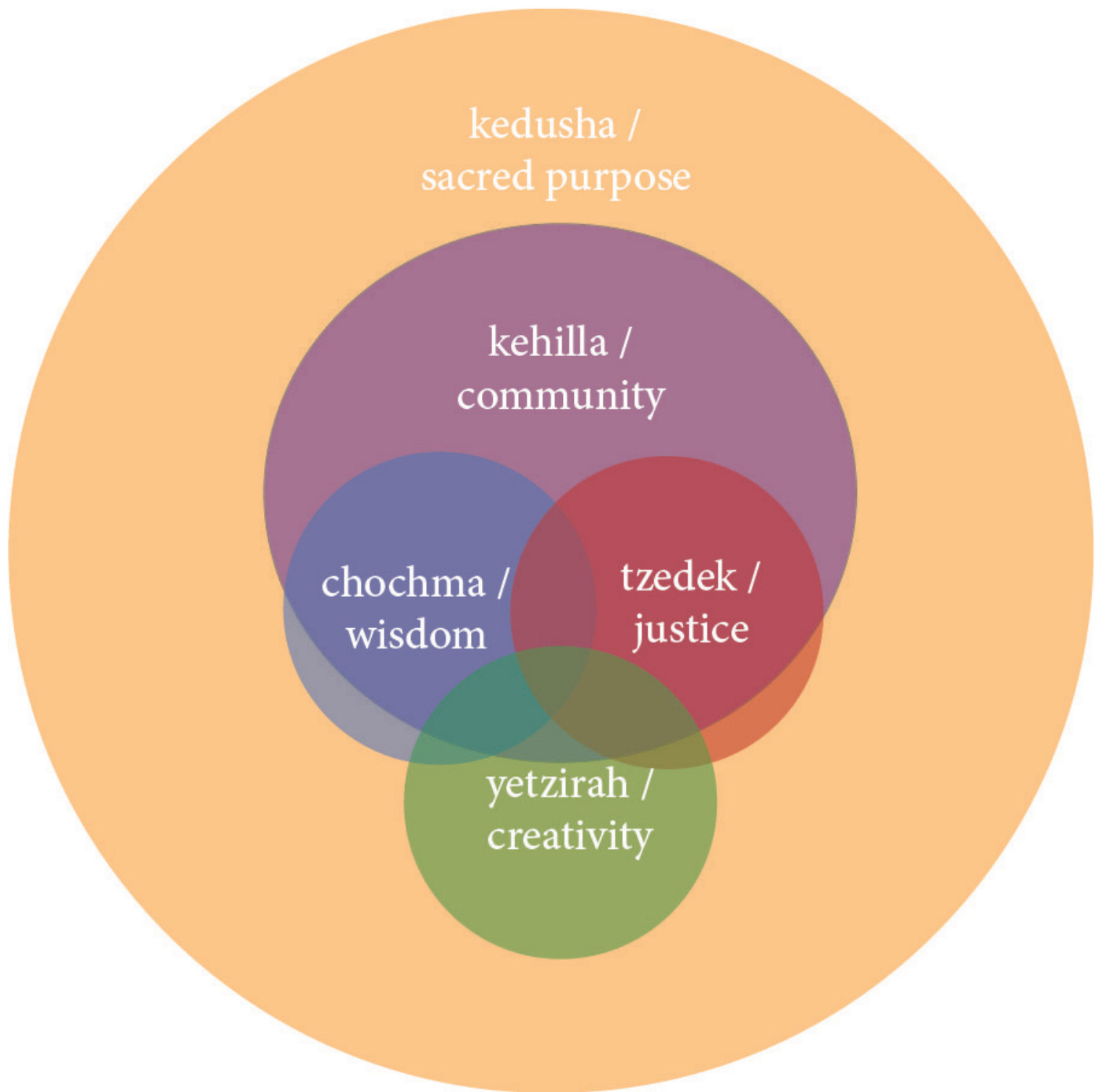
5:30 – 6:00pm	NETWORKING/DOWNTIME
6 – 7pm	DINNER
7:00 – 8:00 pm	WHAT ARE WE LEARNING: REFLECTION & CHECK-IN <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>We will reconnect as a full group, surface key insights and learning from the day.</i>
8:00 – 9:30	BEIT CAFÉ <u><i>In the Great Hall</i></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Enjoy a fun evening showcasing the creativity of the <i>Kenissa</i> Network.

Tuesday, March 6

- *All sessions in the synagogue, unless otherwise noted.*

7:15 – 8:00 am	MORNING SPIRITUAL GATHERING Two concurrent options Traditional <i>Shacharit</i>: Rabbi Isaiah Rothstein <i>(Synagogue)</i> Zazen and Torah: Dr. Brenda Shoshanna <i>(Library)</i> In this session we will learn how to do <i>zazen</i> , Zen meditation. This is a profound training in listening. After some chanting we will sit together and take a Torah teaching with us into the silence. The beautiful combination of simple meditation, where we enter the silence and the teachings of Torah, allow us to truly listen, hear and respond to the still small voice within.
8 – 8:55 am	BREAKFAST
9:00 – 10:30 am	APPLICATION: COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Learn about Kenissa communities of practice, and experience the value of being in conversation and exploration with peers about a topic of pressing interest and concern for your work and leadership.</i>
10:30 – 10:45 am	BREAK
10:45 – 11:45 am	APPLICATION: BRINGING IT TOGETHER, TAKING IT HOME <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Develop an intentional plan to advance your leadership, organization and/or sector, and gain support of a peer coach in refining and reflecting on your plan.</i>
11:45 – 12:30 pm	CLOSING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Share next steps for staying connected with one another and the Kenissa Network overall. Provide feedback for future Kenissa gatherings.</i>
12:30	LUNCH

Kenissa Venn Diagram



NOTES