

RABBI STEVE GUTOW AND RABBI DR. RACHEL SABATH BEIT-HALACHMI in conversation with Dan Cedarbaum on “Is Jewish Life Meaningless Without Jewish Law?”

Sunday, October 25, at 1:00PM EDT • Online, using the Zoom platform

This program is free and open to the public.



Rabbi Mordecai M. Kaplan argued, in 1948, that the answer to the question posed above is “yes”. Yet most liberal Jews today believe that they are participants in a “post-*halakhic*” form of Judaism. Please join two of the most interesting liberal Jewish thinkers we know for what is sure to be a fascinating conversation about some fundamental issues that confront non-Orthodox Jews today, issues that will shape the future of our communities.

Steve Gutow is a Visiting/Research Scholar at the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service. He brings a powerful depth and richness of expertise in organizing, advocacy, and reaching across the divisions that have undermined the sense of shared obligation and fate in America and beyond. He served as President and CEO of the Jewish Council of Public Affairs (JCPA) from 2005 until 2015. The JCPA has for 80 years been the umbrella organization for both 120 local community relations councils throughout the country and 16 national organizations, including all the major Jewish religious movements as well as the ADL, the AJC, the NCJW, and others. Steve attended the University of Texas at Austin, where he earned an undergraduate degree in History in 1970 and a J.D. in 1977. He received his rabbinical degree from the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in 2003. In 2016, Gratz College awarded Steve an honorary doctorate. When *Newsweek* rated American rabbis, Gutow was repeatedly recognized as one of the nation’s most influential rabbis in 2009, 2010, and 2012. He has also been recognized as one of the nation’s top Jewish leaders by the *Forward*.

Rachel Sabath Beit-Halachmi is a well-known thought leader, institutional builder, strategic innovator, published author, and public speaker. She currently serves Ohavay Zion Synagogue as their visiting Rabbi and is completing two books for publication. Rachel also serves as a Senior Fellow of The Mordecai M. Kaplan Center for Jewish Peoplehood. Most recently, Rabbi Sabath was the National Director of Recruitment and Admissions, Assistant Professor of Jewish Thought and Ethics, and President’s Scholar at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC). Prior to that appointment, Rachel served as Vice President of the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem and for over a decade as a member of the Institute’s faculty. Ordained at HUC in New York in 1995, she also earned a Ph.D. in Jewish Philosophy from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

Dan Cedarbaum is co-founder and Executive Director of The Mordecai M. Kaplan Center for Jewish Peoplehood. From 2002-2006, he was the President of the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation, and a member of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. In addition, he has served as a member of the Board of Governors of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College and as a member of the Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees of the United Jewish Communities (now The Jewish Federations of North America). He is the author of several articles on various aspects of Kaplan’s thought, including his approach to Jewish law, and the Reconstructionist movement. He is a graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Law School.

Presented by:



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For more information, please
e-mail dan@kaplancenter.org
or call 847-492-5200.

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+1-312-626-6799, +1-646-876-9923, +1-253-215-8782, +1-301-715-8592 — Meeting ID: 826 2358 2191.

Organized at the end of 2010 and based in Evanston, Illinois, The Mordecai M. Kaplan Center for Jewish Peoplehood is a not-for-profit organization devoted to the transformation of Jewish community through the dissemination and promotion of the thought and writings of Mordecai Kaplan and the advancement of the agenda of the Kaplanian approach to Judaism in the 21st century. The Kaplan Center’s perspective is explicitly non-denominational. Please visit <https://kaplancenter.org>.