

## Study Questions for SHJ

### Humanistic Judaism, Spring 2018

#### “Jews and White Privilege,” by Judi Gladstone

1. The article does not say exactly what white privilege is, or how this is expressed in real life but refers to other pieces. Do you understand what this term means?
2. Do you have a sense of the relationship of "Jewishness" and "white privilege"? What is it?
3. How does your community deal with this issue? Has it undertaken similar work as these seminars? What steps do you think are needed to become more inclusive?
4. What would you do in a situation where participants became difficult?

#### “The In-Between Spaces,” by William Thompson

1. William Thompson relates his experience as an adopted/converted Humanistic Jew, and his treatment as "not a real Jew". Is your community welcoming of people like William?
2. How important is it for a Jew to be born a Jew?
3. Does your community make sure there are no income barriers to full participation by members? What steps can be taken to ensure this?

#### “Interview with Eddie Tabash,” by Paul Golin

1. It seems incredible that the separation of church and state as enshrined in the Constitution can be under threat in the United States, but it is so. What can your community, and what can you do, to prevent this guarantee being eroded?

#### “Breaking through Gender and Disability,” by Rabbi Denise Handlarski

1. Rabbi Denise's description of the empowerment of a group of disabled women learning self-defense is inspiring. Are courses like this available in your community? How could they be organized?
2. Does your community treat women with dignity and respect? Are there "subterranean" sexual issues that need to be addressed?
3. Are the recent revelations of harassment and exploitation in the workplace and the media a sign that things are improving or simply the prying off of a manhole cover over a sewer?

#### “Passover,” revised by Rabbi Jeffrey Falick and a review of *Thinking about the Torah*, by Rabbi Jeremy Kridel

1. Rabbi Jeffrey Falick recounts the evidence of the relationship of Jews and Egypt in ancient times that is expressed in the Torah, especially the story of the exodus across the Red Sea, which does not appear to have happened. What are the implications of this to you? Do you think this has relevance to contemporary relationships? How does your community express this? Would you like it to change? What would you like to see?
2. Rabbi Jeremy Kridel reads a book by scholar Kenneth Seeskin, *Thinking about the Torah*, and finds it wanting. Rabbi Jeremy says that what has been called "Jewish philosophy" is more a defense of Judaism than philosophy itself, a kind of theology. Does your community grapple with these issues? How is liturgy affected? What is your own thinking?

#### “Fresh perspective: My Path to Humanistic Judaism,” by Dustin Hausner

1. Dustin Hausner outlines the events that moved him as an agnostic from Conservative Judaism where he was raised to Humanistic Judaism. Does his experience reflect your own? If you were raised in HJ, what would you say to someone from another stream of Judaism challenging your approach?
2. How might Dustin's example be a guide to approaching other secular Jews who "go through the motions" in Conservative, Orthodox or Reform?