

The God Cafe Experience: A Project Created by Rabbi Sarah Brammer-Shlay

What is God? Who is God? What do we talk about when we talk about God? The God Cafe creates a space to discuss God/divinity as a concept, exploring what God means to each of us and learn about the variety of approaches to God in Jewish tradition. It is an opportunity to explore a topic often not discussed and to build community around our questions and insights. Learning includes reflection on our own experiences, listening to the stories of others and diving into a variety of texts. Rabbi Sarah began this project while she was in rabbinical school through the support of the Auerbach Grants for Rabbinic Innovation. The project began with 1:1 phone conversations followed by workshops and eventually evolved into an entire cohort series, in Jewish and multi-faith settings. All are welcome to join, whether this is something you rarely think about or it's your favorite thing to explore.

Examples of God Cafe experiences in the past:

- 5-6 week cohort experiences with a virtual community of 5-10 people
- One-time workshops for synagogues, communal groups, etc...
- One on one conversations exploring this topic
- Incorporation of a conversation about God/divinity into a Shabbat service
- Want something different? Rabbi Sarah is willing to create a custom experience for your community.

Want to bring Rabbi Sarah to your community?

If you are interested in having a God Cafe experience in your community, please reach out to Rabbi Sarah Brammer-Shlay at sarah.brammer.shlay@gmail.com

Reviews from Previous Participants:

“Sarah Brammer-Shlay's G-d Cafe Cohort was a deeply moving experience. While the teaching Sarah provides about various Jewish theological concepts over time is eye-opening and intriguing, the true magic of the experience lies in the connections made between participants and Sarah and among participants themselves. In fact, both facets of the experience parallel one another: while learning about different theologians' concepts of God over history, group members learn about one another's personal concepts of God. The result is a soul-searching learning experience that leaves each participant counting the days until the next meeting.”

“Sarah is an amazing teacher. Thoughtful, empathetic and engaged. She was able to facilitate meaningful learning about very complex and nuanced topics. It was also really special to connect with a cohort of other folks similarly interested in this topic. I felt like part of a community!”

“This is the most unique class I have ever taken in regards to Jewish learning and spirituality. Sarah creates a space that allows for deep questioning and conversation that I have never encountered before in a Jewish space. To discuss G-d is to discuss the most personal beliefs and outlooks on life. I feel grateful to have been given this opportunity.”

“Sarah Brammer-Shlay is still in rabbinical school, but the insights, intellect, and spirituality she offers in her "G-d Cafe" course go far beyond what we might expect of a student or an intern. In the G-d Cafe class, each of us first shared where we were in our perceptions (or non-perceptions, as the case might be) of G-d. Then she took us on a journey of the mind and the heart, looking at G-d through Biblical text, medieval texts, and modern ones. Always she left time for individual reflection and sharing. We came away with an appreciation of the way that concepts of G-d have engaged Talmudists, scholars, and rabbis (both past and contemporary) over the

centuries. We developed appreciation for the views of others in the group that differed vastly from our own, and in the final projects, witnessed the results of our communal study and personal reflections through a vibrant series of final projects. Kudos to Sarah and to my classmates. If you have a chance to study with Sarah, grab it!”

“I learned as much from Sarah's facilitation and pedagogy in this class as I did from the content. She modeled incredibly generous, grounded, powerful, gentle, curious, caring support for each person in the group and for us as a collective.”

Articles from Rabbi Sarah Brammer-Shlay about the God Cafe:

God Cafes- Evolve <https://evolve.reconstructingjudaism.org/god-cafes/>

God Cafe: A Contemporary Reconstructionist Approach to Theology-
Kaplan Center <https://kaplancenter.org/god-cafe-a-contemporary-reconstructionist-approach-to-theology/>