

A young man with dark hair, wearing a white and black striped tallit (prayer shawl) over a dark shirt, is shown in profile, looking down at an open book he is holding. The background is softly blurred, showing other people in similar attire, suggesting a synagogue setting.

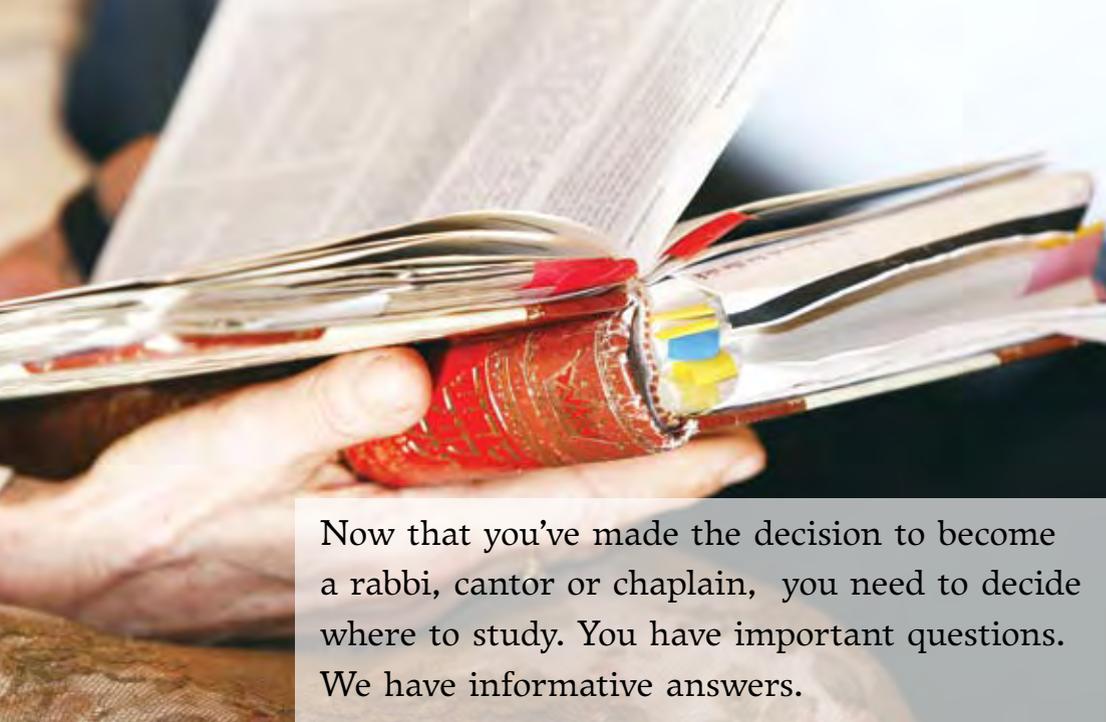
Becoming a Rabbi, Cantor or Chaplain at the Academy for Jewish Religion, CA (AJR, CA)

“Ask and learn”

I Macc., 10.72



Academy for Jewish Religion | CA
Serving as a bridge between the pillars of Judaism



Now that you've made the decision to become a rabbi, cantor or chaplain, you need to decide where to study. You have important questions. We have informative answers.



What is our mission?

AJR, CA is a transdenominational, pluralistic institution dedicated to the training of rabbis, cantors, and chaplains. Our mission is to develop religious leaders steeped in Torah wisdom and tradition, and capable of transforming Jewish communities into places where all Jews can grow toward wholeness and well-being.

What is our history?

AJR, CA was founded in 2000 by rabbis who recognized that there was an urgent need to produce a new kind of Jewish spiritual leader; one who could effectively reach out to all Jews, including the unaffiliated. Determined to create the highest caliber institution, our founders recruited illustrious faculty, accomplished students and dedicated community leaders. By 2006, our student body had grown so substantially that we moved our campus to the Yitzhak Rabin Hillel Center for Jewish Life at UCLA in the beautiful Westwood area of Los Angeles.

"AJR, CA's...impact is growing rapidly."

The Jewish Journal of Greater Los Angeles, June 2007



What is our innovative approach to teaching and training?

We believe that in order for our students to be most effective in their role as 21st century Jewish spiritual leaders, they must have in-depth knowledge of the Ancient Jewish Texts as well as the teachings and traditions of all of Judaism's denominations. In this way, they are exposed to the full range of approaches to Jewish learning, values, and practices.

We also believe that in order to help their fellow Jews feel a deep, personal connection to Judaism, they must be able to convey a very real sense of spirituality and have the ability to foster spiritual growth. As such, a major emphasis on spirituality is reflected throughout the curriculum.

Why do we have an intensive three-days-per week schedule of classes?

Many AJR, CA students have significant professional and personal responsibilities and a number fly in weekly from other parts of California and the Western States. Our intensive Sunday – Tuesday schedule of classes was created to meet the needs of this unique student body.





What are the goals of each School/Program?

The Rabbinical School

The goal of the Rabbinical School is to train men and women to become spiritual leaders who will serve all Jews and Jewish movements, who will be steeped in the teachings and traditions of our sacred texts and, at the same time, bring a sense of spirituality and holiness to our lives as Jews today.

The Cantorial School

AJR, CA's Cantorial School has the distinction of being the only Cantorial School in the Western United States. The goal of the Cantorial School is to train men and women to become cantors who will be a living resource of the varied aspects of the cantorial musical tradition—with mastery of the melodies and chants for Jewish prayer, and of the music for home, school and community. This mastery, coupled with the ability to impart and inspire, includes the contemporary modes and sounds, which resonate with today's generation.



The Chaplaincy Program

The goal of the Chaplaincy program is to provide a dynamic and supportive learning community in which students can deepen their Judaic knowledge and pastoral and counseling skills in order to be able to serve all Jews in a variety of chaplaincy settings including hospitals, senior citizen centers, nursing homes, treatment centers and prisons.



Who are our teachers?

Our faculty is comprised of renowned scholars who have taught at such prestigious universities as Columbia, Princeton, MIT, Stanford and Georgetown as well

as outstanding congregational clergy who hold rabbinic ordinations and cantorial diplomas from Yeshiva University, Jewish Theological Seminary, American Jewish University (formerly the University of Judaism), and Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion, as well as smicha from ALEPH (the Jewish Renewal Movement). They are affiliated with some of the most prominent Orthodox, Conservative, Reconstructionist, Reform, and Renewal synagogues in the Los Angeles area.



Who are our students?

Our students are dynamic men and women who have already achieved success in such fields as medicine, law, academia, business and the arts, and are now pursuing their dream of becoming rabbis, cantors and chaplains. They come from all denominations but they share a deep love of Judaism and a commitment to serve the Jewish people.

They bring a level of maturity and wealth of life experiences which contribute to an atmosphere of deep collegiality and tremendous intellectual stimulation.



“The Academy’s student body is rich in both gifts of mind and gifts of heart. They bring to our school remarkable intellectual powers and profound sensitivity.”

Rabbi Elijah Schochet, PhD

World-renowned expert on the origins of the Hasidic Movement and the author of the highly respected book, *The Hasidic Movement and the Gaon of Vilna*
AJR, CA Professor of Talmud



Do our alumni find meaningful jobs?

AJR, CA alumni are making an impact nationwide. The vast majority of our Rabbinical and Cantorial School graduates are either leading Conservative, Reconstructionist, Reform, Jewish Renewal, and Transdenominational congregations or serving as rabbis of Jewish day schools or directors of synagogue religious schools across the United States. Some are teaching Religious Studies at major universities and others are heading chaplaincy-related organizations. Our Chaplaincy Program graduates are working in local hospitals with patients of all faiths.



How well known is AJR, CA outside the Los Angeles area?

AJR, CA enjoys a national reputation. Our school and those affiliated with it have been profiled by local, national and international media. Members of our faculty and administration serve as officers of national professional organizations as do a number of our alumni. AJR, CA faculty, administration and alumni have released well-received books and CDs and our students are increasingly recruited to officiate at High Holy Days services by congregations across the US.



What is the “AJR, CA experience”?

There are certain commonalities that resonate with everyone who is connected with AJR, CA. The Academy is a truly unique, intellectually stimulating environment that is, at the same time, spiritually uplifting, deeply caring, and incredibly warm and supportive. There is a real and sincere respect accorded for disparate backgrounds, beliefs and practices.

Our students speak of their “chavruta” and the “camaraderie and atmosphere of mutual support” that exists among them. They also note their “brilliant,” “inspiring,” and “encouraging” teachers who are “dedicated to the deepening of knowledge and spirituality, with an eye to creating a new kind of Jewish spiritual leader.” Our alumni echo these sentiments and express their appreciation for being given “all the tools and training” that have proven “invaluable” in their current positions. Our faculty members laud their students and describe their teaching experience as being “intellectually challenging and enriching.”

This is the AJR, CA experience.



“I received superlative training in the most collegial and intellectually stimulating environment possible. My experience at the Academy has left me well-prepared for leading and working with my congregation.”

Cantor Judy Greenfeld, '04

Spiritual leader and founder, Nachshon Minyan (Encino, CA)



“My experience in the Rabbinical School has been spiritually joyous, intellectually fulfilling, and emotionally satisfying.”

Michael Eula, PhD, JD

Professor of History, Administrative Law Judge
Winner, National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship
AJR, CA Rabbinical School Student



Is AJR, CA right for you?

If a transdenominational approach is what you're looking for in your professional training, **then AJR, CA is right for you.**

If a curriculum that emphasizes spirituality and spiritual growth is one of your priorities, **then AJR, CA is right for you.**

If you want an environment that is intellectually, personally and professionally enriching and supportive, **then AJR, CA is right for you.**

If you seek to study with inspirational teachers who offer invaluable insights while encouraging personal expression, **then AJR, CA is right for you.**

If you would like your fellow students to be extremely bright, highly accomplished, mature men and women who share a deep love for Judaism and the Jewish people, **then AJR, CA is right for you.**

How do you learn more?

Come see for yourself what AJR, CA is all about. Meet our students, faculty and administration and sit in classes. For more information and to schedule a visit, contact our Director of Admissions and Recruitment at 310-824-1586.



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