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Winnipeg Course Addresses Dissonance between Religion and Western Values

Winnipeg, MB—This November, the Jewish Learning Centre in Winnipeg will offer *Wrestling with Faith*, a new six-session course by the acclaimed Rohr Jewish Learning Institute (JLI), that openly addresses common challenges people have in their relationship with G-d.

Beginning Tuesday, October 23rd at 7:30 pm, participants in the course will grapple with issues that many struggle with, including beliefs in Judaism that seem primitive or outdated, reconciling scientific findings with ideas that cannot be proven in a lab, and the role of religion regarding gender roles, relationship choices, and other such controversial issues.

“We recognize that almost everyone has some degree of skepticism when it comes to religion,” Rabbi Shmuly Altein of Chabad-Lubavitch, the local JLI Instructor in Winnipeg, told *The Jewish Post and News*, “We’ve created this course for participants to think critically about these challenges—to approach them with an array of insightful perspectives—so we can articulate our beliefs to ourselves and to the next generation with clarity and conviction.”

Wrestling with Faith explores questions such as: Why do I need G-d if I can live perfectly well without Him? Does G-d really care about the nuances of Jewish practice? Doesn’t the concept of “Jewish chosenness” seem racist? How can we relate to a loving and caring

G-d amid the experience of tragedy and suffering?
How do we reconcile compelling evidence for evolution and the age of the universe with a Bible that tells a different story? And: Is it even possible to develop a relationship with a G-d I cannot perceive with my five senses?

“People often deal with such issues by going on the defense,” explained Rabbi Zalman Abraham of JLI’s Brooklyn, New York headquarters. “In this course we stay away from that. Instead, we embrace the challenges wholeheartedly and seek a broader context through which to understand the issues.”

Jennifer Wiseman, a senior astrophysicist at NASA and the director of the *American Association for the Advancement of Science’s Dialogue on Science, Ethics, and Religion*, commented about the course: “At a time when science and technology dominate the mechanics and framing of our modern lives, it is more important than ever to ask the bigger questions of life’s purpose and values. This course enables the seeker to embrace the achievements of modern science while seeking the higher gifts of wisdom, meaning, and a personal relationship with G-d.”

Like all JLI programs, this course is designed to appeal to people at all levels of knowledge, including those without any prior experience or background in Jewish learning. All JLI courses are open to the public, and attendees need not be affiliated with a particular synagogue, temple, or other house of worship.

Interested students may call 204-339-8737 or visit ChabadWinnipeg.org for registration and for other course-related information.



The Jewish Learning Institute is the adult education arm of Chabad-Lubavitch and a partner agency of the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg. As the preeminent provider of adult Jewish learning in Winnipeg, JLI's mission is to make Jewish learning accessible and personally meaningful to every Jew, regardless of background or affiliation.

Chabad-Lubavitch provides Jewish education, community outreach and social service programming for families and individuals of all ages, backgrounds, and affiliations. Thousands are touched by Chabad each year through our school, day camps, early childcare centre, adult education institute, library, kosher kitchen, family workshops, youth groups, and holiday programming.
