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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Press Contact: Rabbi Shmuly Altein  
JLI@ChabadWinnipeg.org

**Jews of Winnipeg Address Relevance of Judaism in Modern Society**

The Jewish Learning Institute (JLI) will present *To Be a Jew in the Free World: Jewish Identity through the Lens of Modern History* the institute's new six-session Winter 2014 course that will begin during the first week of February.

Rabbi Shmuly Altein of Chabad-Lubavitch will conduct the six course sessions at 7:30 pm Tuesday evenings at the Jewish Learning Centre on Mathers Ave.

"A recent PEW study exposed that 22% of Jews identify as 'Jews with no religion' and for many, this is a clear indication that the landscape of Jewish identity is changing rapidly" said Rabbi Zalman Abraham of JLI's headquarters in Brooklyn, New York. "Our objective with this course is to initiate a discussion about Jewish identity, why it is still relevant, and what we can do to make it something our children and grandchildren will cherish for generations to come."

In *To Be a Jew in the Free World*, participants will confront questions of allegiance and issues in which Judaism and contemporary society appear to be in conflict. Looking into the past, the course explores a series of fascinating case studies, such as arguments made in the 1650s to convince Oliver Cromwell to readmit Jews to England, and how Ulysses S. Grant's 1862 expulsion of the Jews became a defining issue in his presidential election.

*To be a Jew in the Free World* is unique in that it will likely represent the first nationwide effort to bring the Jewish community together to address these important issues since the findings of the PEW report were released in October of 2013.

"The subject of identity is close to the hearts of many in our Jewish community, yet it's a subject that is rarely discussed nowadays." said Rabbi Shmuly Altein, the local JLI instructor in





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Winnipeg, MB. "The course provides a rare opportunity to address this issue that will benefit the wider community of Winnipeg, and we invite everyone to attend."

Like all JLI programs, Life in the Balance is designed to appeal to people at all levels of Jewish knowledge, including those without any prior experience or background in Jewish learning. The course is accredited to offer CME credits for medical professionals. 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 [www.ChabadWinnipeg.org](http://www.ChabadWinnipeg.org) for registration and other course-related information.

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Motivated by a profound love for every Jew and spurred by a boundless optimism, Chabad-Lubavitch touches and enriches the lives of young and old, professionals and laypeople, the affiliated and the non-affiliated, immigrants and long-time citizens, regardless of background, affiliation, or level of commitment.

The Jewish Learning Institute (JLI), the adult education arm of Chabad-Lubavitch and a partner agency of the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg, was created in 2008 to address the growing need for in-depth Jewish knowledge. JLI aims at changing the way people feel about being Jewish through learning and discovery.

As the pre-eminent provider of adult Jewish learning in Winnipeg, JLI's mission is to make the wisdom of Jewish learning accessible to everyone. "The Jewish Learning Institute allows you to explore basic Jewish ideas, to share critical analysis and interactive discussion with exciting instructors and classmates," said Mr. David Chochinov, chairman of the local JLI committee.



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[JLI@ChabadWinnipeg.org](mailto:JLI@ChabadWinnipeg.org)