

svara teaching kollel.

SVARA's Teaching Kollel is a two-year learning and teacher education program designed to train a cadre of gifted, experienced, queer and trans educators, rabbis, activists, community leaders, and change-makers in both the SVARA method of teaching Talmud and the creation of radical bet midrash-centered communities of Jewishly rooted, svara-dik learners around the world. SVARA's Teaching Kollel combines intensive Talmud study with training in pedagogy and facilitation to equip teachers to model public learning in SVARA's method.

Upon graduation from SVARA's Teaching Kollel, Fellows will be equipped to implement ongoing SVARA-method bet midrash learning in their home communities, making empowering and transformative experiences of Talmud study as a traditionally radical spiritual practice accessible to all.

SVARA's Teaching Fellows will emerge with a new lens through which to view the Talmud, the bet midrash setting, the pedagogy of Talmud teaching, the teacher-student relationship—and the Jewish tradition itself. Over the course of two years, Fellows gain the skills and experience to allow them to upend the educational power dynamics of all-too-many conventional Jewish educational settings, shifting the focal point from teacher to learner, and transforming the bet midrash environment to one of critical pedagogy, clear methodology, rigor, love, and empowerment.

The SVARA Teaching Kollel provides comprehensive training and individualized mentorship to support SVARA Fellows to:

- Teach daylong and ongoing, weekly Talmud learning sessions in the SVARA method
- Develop, nurture, and facilitate bet midrash communities for mixed-level learners
- Address the unique experiences of queer and under-represented learners in the bet midrash
- Bring the values underlying SVARA's methodology into their lives, teaching practice, and leadership beyond the bet midrash setting

Each graduated SVARA Fellow will implement a local, ongoing SVARA-method bet midrash community. These batei midrash will support a movement of Talmud learning that invests in those who have been denied access to the tradition to become empowered to grow into their role as interpreters and shapers of our tradition and the world in which they live.



GOALS OF SVARA'S TEACHING KOLLEL

SVARA's Teaching Kollel will train queer and trans rabbis, educators, activists, and community leaders in SVARA's unique approach to teaching Talmud and convening bet midrash communities. Individual fellows will gain the following skills & competencies in the four core areas of **gamirna**, **savirna**, **pedagogy**, and **tachlis**.

gamirna | confidence & competence in the practice of learning

Fellows will:

- deepen their practice of Talmud study in SVARA's method;
- increase their exposure to rabbinic literature through a queer and critical lens;
- and become more empowered independent learners of Talmud and commentaries.

savirna | embodiment of a traditionally radical approach to the Talmud & tradition

Fellows will:

- emerge with a new lens through which to view the Talmud and tradition that is sensitive to the radical, bold, and creative nature of the Jewish tradition and the Talmud that models it,
- recognize the centrality of moral intuition (*svara*) in the past and future development of the Jewish tradition;
- see themselves and their students as active "players" in the evolution of the Jewish tradition.

pedagogy | cultivation of a teacher identity that is rooted in the practices and approaches that nurture authenticity, empowerment, and transformation

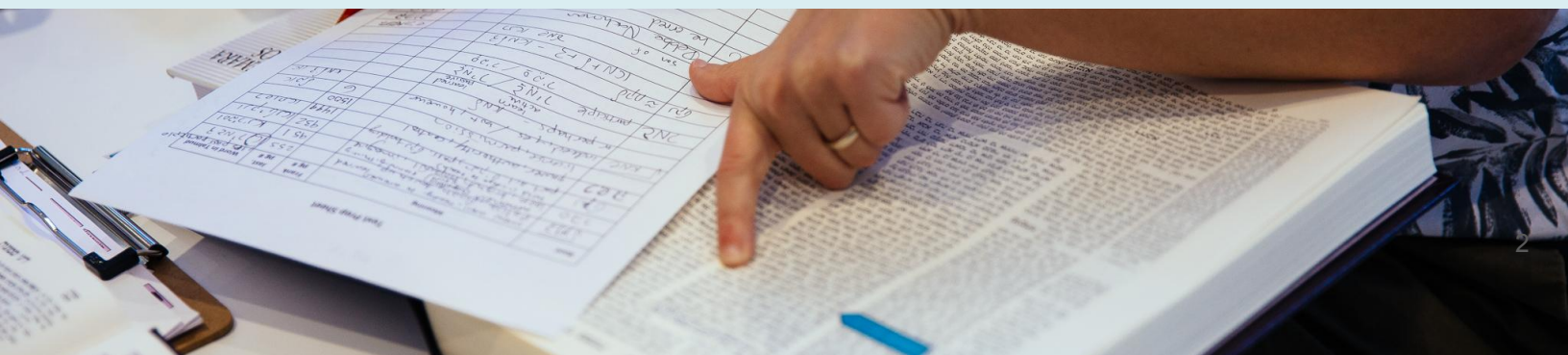
Fellows will:

- be able to visibilize their own learning processes thoughtfully and skillfully to learners through authentic co-learning,
- embrace the liberatory potential of upending conventional educational power dynamics in the bet midrash, shifting the focal point from teacher to learner,
- facilitate learning from a place of love and humility

tachlis | tools for executing SVARA-method learning communities

Fellows will:

- gain the necessary skills to nurture and implement SVARA-method bet midrash-centered communities



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

year one: learning year

In the **Learning Year (Sept 2021 - May 2022)**, Fellows will be expected to learn weekly in chevruta (2 hours), attend a weekly online shiur (2 hours), explore and analyze articles & readings from the field of contemporary critical Talmud scholarship, participate in a monthly meeting with a faculty mentor, and attend two four- to five-day online intensives.

year two: pedagogy year

In the **Pedagogy Year (Sept 2022 - May 2023)**, Fellows will be expected to learn weekly in chevruta (2 hours), attend a weekly online shiur (2 hours), explore and analyze articles & readings about critical pedagogy / democratic education, attend two two four- to five-day online intensives and teach two six- to eight-week SVARA-method bet midrash programs in their home community or online.

overview & commitment

- **WEEKLY SHIUR** (2 hours/week) - Fellows will participate in an online weekly shiur led by a SVARA faculty member.
- **WEEKLY CHEVRUTA** (2 hours/week) - Fellows will maintain a weekly chevruta practice for at least 2 hours with another Teaching Fellow in the context of which they will learn SVARA's core texts.
- **INTENSIVES** - During each year of the fellowship, we will convene two online intensives. Participation is mandatory at all intensives over the two years. Dates for the online intensives are below:
 - *Fall Intensive (Learning Year):* October 2021
 - *Spring Intensive (Learning Year):* May 2022
 - *Fall Intensive (Pedagogy Year):* October 2022
 - *Spring Intensive (Pedagogy Year):* May 2023
- **MONTHLY MENTORSHIP MEETINGS** (1 hour/month) - Fellows will meet with a SVARA faculty member for one 45-minute-long mentorship meeting each month via video conference.
- **PRACTICUM** (6 hours/week during while in session) - During the pedagogy year, Fellows will teach two six- to eight-week batei midrash in the SVARA method—one in the fall, and one in the spring—either independently or in partnership with a local institution, with support and coaching from SVARA Faculty throughout (**PEDAGOGY YEAR ONLY**)



IDEAL APPLICANTS

Members of SVARA's Teaching Kollel are aspiring bet midrash leaders who are eager to bring SVARA's pedagogy and methodology to their home communities. Upon graduation from the Kollel, Fellows are expected to put their training into practice by teaching in SVARA's method locally in their own communities, developing new bet midrash centered communities, and/or teaching in SVARA's national learning spaces. Additionally, Fellows are expected to support the growth of a movement in which rigorous Talmud learning as a spiritual practice is accessible to all, particularly centering the insights of those who have been historically marginalized within traditional learning spaces.

Ideal applicants to SVARA's Teaching Kollel:

- identify as queer or trans
- are experienced educators/facilitators with strong facilitation skills
- lead with self-awareness, groundedness, humility, and *mentschiness*
- are committed to & passionate about Talmud study as a personal practice
- are committed to acknowledging and interrogating mechanisms of power and inequality in the world and the bet midrash
- have had at least three years of experience learning in a SVARA bet midrash and/or in the SVARA method in chevruta
- have experience learning rabbinic texts in the original beyond the "intermediate" level
- are invested in creating transformative and empowering learning experiences
- are resourceful and skilled in community-building, organizing, and project management
- have the desire and intention to create a bet midrash learning community using the SVARA method that opens up access to Talmud learning to queer and marginalized people

Questions about this? Reach out to Laynie (laynie@svara.org) to set up a time to talk!



TUITION

Tuition rates are indicated below. All learning materials, retreat fees, classes, and mentorship sessions are included in the cost of tuition. In addition, SVARA Fellows can request micro-grants to support the implementation of their batei midrash during their Pedagogy Year practica. **We are committed to accepting a cohort of learners with a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds and financial experiences, and as such have created an individual calculation scale for tuition rates rather than a flat rate.** The true cost per fellow is \$12,000/year.

tuition scale

We ask participants to contribute 3-5% of their annual income as tuition for SVARA's Teaching Kollel for each year of the program. Annual tuition can be paid in full any time prior to the start of the first semester, or paid in installments throughout the year. Should this tuition scale be beyond your means, be in touch with [Laynie](#) to explore further reduced rates. A sample tuition calculation may be seen below, and we invite participants to calculate their own tuition rates when registering for the program.

Annual income	Percentage of income	Annual tuition
\$10,000	3%	\$300/year
\$20,000	3%	\$600/year
\$30,000	4%	\$1,200/year
\$40,000	4%	\$1,600/year
\$50,000	4%	\$2,000/year
\$60,000	5%	\$3,000/year
\$70,000	5%	\$3,500/year
\$80,000	5%	\$4,000/year
\$90,000	5%	\$4,500/year
\$100,000	5%	\$5,000/year

