



# כומר קתולי, רב הומו והייטקיסט אפרו-אמריקאי נכנסים לשיעור עברית

בית הספר לשפות מידלברי זכה למעמד יוקרתי בזכות השיטה: תלמידיו נשבעים להחנות מהעולם שבחוץ לשבעה שבועות, שבהם ידברו אך ורק עברית. צח יוקד, מורה בבית הספר, מסביר איך מלמדים עברית בלי תרגום לשפה זרה ובעזרת שירה בציבור וריקודי עם

// צח יוקד, ומנוב

דומיניק (מימין) קודם  
ומפל רגו קטרוז או  
היפוך בשפת הוויטי

## A Catholic Priest, a Gay Rabbi, and an African American Entrepreneur Walk into a Hebrew Course (English Summary)

Highly ranked amongst the world's language intensives, Middlebury College's language schools are unique in the world and the School of Hebrew is emblematic of that uniqueness. The School of Hebrew is considered to be one of the best programs of Modern Hebrew instruction that exists and draws a wide array of students from multiple backgrounds to the picturesque town of Middlebury, Vermont to learn under the "Pledge"—the Middlebury commitment to only communicate in a target language for the duration of the summer. Students eat, learn, play, and share life with each other and their teachers only in Hebrew.

Dominick is a 29-year-old African-American tech industry start-upper with an MA in urban planning who has taken weeks out of his life to communicate only in Modern Hebrew. He does so in part to explore deeper connections to the religious texts of his Christian faith and to continue to foster relationships with Jewish people. Moreover, he hopes to employ his Hebrew in the context of the Israel-Palestine conflict in order to foster peace through joint business ventures in the Middle East.

Paul, also 29, is a student in the School of Hebrew as well as a Catholic Priest studying at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome. Part of the connection to Hebrew for Paul is the possibility of communicating with fellow Roman Catholic Christians in various Hebrew-speaking Catholic congregations in the Holy Land. Paul fell in love with Hebrew from the moment he heard it. Kevin, 36, on the other hand is a gay rabbinical student at Jewish Theological Seminary, the premiere institution for Judaism's conservative movement. Kevin's desire to study Modern Hebrew is

intimately related to his connection to Judaism and Hebrew speakers in Israel. For Kevin, Hebrew is an extraordinarily significant element of his engagement with Jewish identity and his religious texts.

Abdullah is the head of the Institute for Israel Studies in Amman, Jordan. The institute is the only non-governmental institute for Israel studies in the Middle East and as the head of such an organization Abdullah sees Hebrew instruction as a means of engaging with Israeli culture and society--not as an enemy, but as one who seeks to understand. Abdullah notes that coursework at Middlebury is far better than available options in Jordan, but adds that much of the difficulty of Hebrew instruction there is related to a lack of materials published in Arabic for would-be learners of Hebrew in the Arab world. This disconnect is a key facet of how Abdullah understands many of the problems between Arab nations and Israel—a sheer lack of effective communication.

Vardit Ringwald, Director of the School of Hebrew connects the growth of the school to the increased demand for instruction in Hebrew. The School is now one of the largest in Middlebury's summer language schools and has seen sustained growth over many summers—in contrast to trends in Hebrew instruction in most American contexts. Vardit also draws attention to the specific emphasis of Middlebury to cooperate with governments from the Arab world and as such, one can see students from various nations such as Jordan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. For Vardit, Hebrew cannot be separated from Israel but at the same time, the school takes proactive steps to provide students with various opportunities to engage with the language from multiple angles. Therein students choose the connections they make within the linguistic context presented by the school.