

National Scholar: One Year Report

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National Scholar One Year Report June 1, 2013—May 31, 2014

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To our members and friends, I am pleased to report that I now have completed the first year of working as the National Scholar of the Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals. We have hit the ground running, and it has been an honor and privilege working to promote our vision nationwide primarily through teaching, and also through writing and creating internet classes. This report summarizes my various projects and activities over the past year.

Overall, I gave over 220 classes, spoke in dozens of communities and campuses, published four books (including two through the Institute), and created a series of online classes. I thank the supporters of the Institute, as well as all of the interested communities and campuses, for making this explosion of learning possible.

The major areas of focus are:

- University Students:

o Teaching four courses per semester to undergraduates at Yeshiva University forms the heart of this educational element. Many of my students have gone on to rabbinical school, graduate school in Jewish Studies, and careers in the rabbinate and in Jewish education, and many others form the lay backbone of communities nationwide and in Israel. I remain in touch with a sizable number of former students. More significantly, a growing number of rabbis and educators who were not my students have found an address for their questions at the

Institute.

o In conjunction with our University Network, I have given classes at Columbia University, New York University, University of Pennsylvania, Cornell University, Brandeis University, and University of Chicago. It has been a valuable experience learning together with students on various campuses, exchanging ideas, and connecting them with our vision.

- Community Education:

o There is a serious thirst for the kind of learning represented by our Institute, and a sizable number of communities have invited us. Through a combination of scholar-in-residence programs and lectures in different communities, we reached thousands of interested adults directly in the past year.

o I have developed a series of lectures on the worldview of our Institute. This past year I gave several individual lectures in different communities, and look forward to offering a full series in the New York area in the coming year.

- Teacher Training:

o One of our central goals is to train other rabbis, community leaders, and educators to spread Torah to schools and communities. In this manner we create bridges with many people in the field to work together. o Last year I taught a year-long course in “How to Teach Bible in Synagogues” to honors rabbinical students at Yeshiva University. This past year I taught a one-semester version to the women in the Graduate Program for Advanced Talmudic Studies at Stern College for Women of Yeshiva University.

o I participate annually as faculty in Yeshiva University’s graduate program in Experiential Education. o I taught a course to rabbinical students at Yeshivat Chovevei Torah Rabbinical School in Riverdale, NY, with an emphasis on both content and methodology.

o I gave teacher-training seminars to Bible faculties at the Ida Crown Academy (Chicago) and the Ramaz High School (New York). Given the complexities of Bible and Jewish Studies our graduates are likely to encounter on secular university campuses, our training focuses on how to equip Jewish Studies high school faculties to prepare their students for the University setting.

- Internet Learning: o We have created an Online Learning section on the Institute’s website, jewishideas.org. You can find links to a growing number of

classes of mine there.

o I have developed a new kind of online video class with the Aleph Beta Academy (alephbeta.org). Thus far my classes on the Books of Joshua, Judges, Lamentations, and Esther are online, Samuel and Kings are in process, and more is yet to come.

- Publications:

o The Institute published my Synagogue Companion this past January. It was distributed to Institute members and interested synagogues, educators, and laypeople across the country. This volume makes accessible comments on the Torah, Haftarat, and Shabbat morning prayers. Additional copies are available at the Institute online store and at amazon.com.

o I published a revised second edition of my first collection of essays on Bible, *Through an Opaque Lens*. It is available at amazon.com.

o I published a new collection of essays on Bible with a focus on methodology, *Peshat Isn't So Simple*. It is available at amazon.com.

o I am in the editing stages of a Jewish Holiday Companion that will be published through the Institute. It contains commentary on the holidays and their major themes and readings.

Below is an itemized listing of the various classes and programs over the past year, as well as some upcoming highlights.

- May 31-June 1: Scholar-in-residence, Young Israel of Jamaica Estates, Queens, NY.
- June 10: Teachers' in-service at the Ida Crown Jewish Academy (High School) in Chicago.
- June 21-22: Scholar-in-residence, Young Israel of Stamford, Connecticut.
- June 26 Lecture in the Experiential Education program by Yeshiva University, "Teaching the Book of Job."
- July 19-20: Scholar-in-residence, Mashadi Persian community in Great Neck, NY.
- July 26-27 Scholar-in-residence, Lincoln Square Synagogue in Manhattan.
- August 16-17 Scholar-in-residence, Lincoln Square Synagogue in Manhattan.

- September 10: Stanley Rudoff Memorial Lecture at the Drisha Institute for Jewish Education: "Introduction to Kohelet: confronting religious challenges."
- October 6: Speaker at Book Reception for new commentary by Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik: Chumash Mesorat HaRav: Chumash with Commentary Based on the Teachings of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik. Young Israel of New Rochelle.
- October 9: Queens College Annual Sephardic Lecture, "A Sephardic Approach to Tradition and Modernity."
- Oct 13, 20, 27: Young Israel of Jamaica Estates. Three-part series on Biblical Wisdom (Proverbs, Job, Kohelet).
- October 27: Columbia-Barnard Hillel/Institute University Network. "Learning Faith from the Text, or Text from Faith: The Challenges of Teaching and Learning the Avraham Narratives and Commentary."
- November 17: Young Israel of Jamaica Estates, "The Books of the Maccabees and Rabbinic Thought: Getting to the Roots of Hanukkah."
- November 21: Teacher training session, Ramaz Bible faculty, New York.
- November 25: Lecture at New York University, "Orthodoxy and Confrontation with Modern Bible Criticism."
- October 16-December 18: Nine-part series on the Book of Judges at Lincoln Square Synagogue in Manhattan.
- October 2-December 11: An eight-part course on "How to Teach Bible in Synagogues" to the Graduate Program for Women in Advanced Talmudic Study at Stern College for Women of Yeshiva University.
- December 8: Lecture at University of Pennsylvania, "The Book of Chronicles: a window into how the Bible was written."
- Shabbat December 13-14: Scholar-in-Residence, Congregation Chovevei Tzion in Chicago.
- January 2: Teacher training session, Ramaz Bible faculty, New York.
- Shabbat January 3-4: Scholar-in-Residence, Congregation Keter Torah (Roemer) in Bergenfield, New Jersey.

- January 13: A class on Megillat Esther, at the Yemei Iyyun of Yeshivat Chovevei Torah Rabbinical School in Riverdale, New York.
- January 29-April 2: Ten-part series on the First Book of Samuel at Lincoln Square Synagogue in Manhattan.
- Shabbat February 7-8: Scholar-in-Residence, Yeshiva University.
- Shabbat February 15: Scholar-in-Residence, Congregation Ohab Shalom in Manhattan.
- Shabbat February 28-March 1: Scholar-in-Residence, Cornell University.
- Shabbat March 7-8: Scholar-in-Residence, Congregation Shaarei Orah in Teaneck. This was a Sephardic-themed Shabbat, and lectures throughout the weekend focused on great Sephardic thinkers and ideas that are good for all Jews.
- Thursday March 20: Book Reception for my books: Vision from the Prophet and Counsel from the Elders, and A Synagogue Companion.
- March: Four-part series in the Book of Jeremiah at Yeshivat Chovevei Torah Rabbinical School.
- May-June: Seven-part series on the Book of Samuel at Lincoln Square Synagogue in Manhattan. Coming attractions include:
 - Shavuot, June 3-5: Scholar-in-residence, Young Israel of West Hartford, Connecticut.
 - Monday, June 16, 7:30 pm: Book Launch for my just-published book, Peshat Isn't So Simple. At Lincoln Square Synagogue, 68th Street and Amsterdam Avenue in Manhattan. Free and open to the public. Copies of the book will be available at a discounted price.
 - Shabbat, June 20-21: Scholar-in-residence, Young Israel of Oceanside.
 - Tuesday, June 24: Lecture on the Book of Job, Yeshiva University Graduate Program in Experiential Education (open only to participants in their program).
 - Sunday June 29-Monday June 30: Three lectures on Tanakh at the yemei iyyun of Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, held this year at Manhattan Day School, 310 West 75th Street in Manhattan. Registration forms and more information at <http://www.yctorah.org/content/view/895/17/> All are welcome.

- Wednesdays in July: Five-part series on the Haftarat for Lamdeinu. The classes will be held at Congregation Beth Aaron, 950 Queen Anne Road. The course costs \$75 and is open to the entire community. For more information and other offerings, please contact lamdeinuteaneck@gmail.com.

Thank you all for your support and enthusiasm, and I look forward to promoting our Torah vision for many years to come.

Rabbi Hayyim Angel

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