
[Update from Rabbi Hayyim Angel, National Scholar of the Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals](#)

National Scholar Six Month Report June 1-November 30, 2013

I am pleased to report that I now have completed the first six months of working as National Scholar of the Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals. It has been an honor and privilege working to support our vision, primarily through teaching and also through writing and internet classes. We have hit the ground running, and this report summarizes our various projects and activities over the past six months. Our initial goals reflect a desire to reach broad segments of the community, joining them in learning dialogue and representing the kind of Torah Judaism that is authentic to tradition and intellectually sound, engaging, and vibrant.

Our major areas of focus are:

University Students:

o Teaching four courses this semester to undergraduates at Yeshiva University forms the heart of this educational element. I will be teaching four more courses in the spring semester. Many of my students have gone on to rabbinical school and careers in the rabbinate and in Jewish education, and many others form the lay backbone of communities nationwide and in Israel.

o Through our University Network, I have given classes at Columbia University and at New York University. A class at the University of Pennsylvania is coming up and I am in touch with campus representatives in several universities as we work on logistics for upcoming classes.

Community Education:

o There is a serious thirst for the kind of learning represented by our Institute, and a growing number of communities have pursued us. Through a combination of Shabbat scholar-in-residence programs, several series' and lectures in different communities, and many more to come, we are reaching many hundreds of interested adults directly.

o I have developed a series of lectures on the underlying worldview of our Institute. Thus far I have given several lectures in different communities, and look forward to giving a fuller series in the New York area in the near future. • Teacher Training:

o One of our central goals is to train other 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 the honors rabbinical students at Yeshiva University. This past semester I taught a one-semester version of the course to the women in the Graduate Program for Advanced Talmudic Studies at Stern College for Women of Yeshiva University.

o I have given 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 better 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 will find links to a number of classes of mine, and this section will grow as more of these classes are recorded and posted online.

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

Publications:

o We are publishing my newest book, *A Synagogue Companion*, through the Institute this January and it will be distributed to all Institute members and interested synagogues, educators, and laypeople across the country. This volume makes accessible comments on the Torah, Haftarat, and Shabbat morning prayers.

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

o I have begun organizing a *Holiday Companion* to be published through the Institute that will contain commentary on the holidays and their major themes. Below is an itemized listing of the various classes and programs over the past six months, 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 Hillel/Institute University Network, "Orthodoxy and Confrontation with Modern Bible Criticism."
- October 16-December 18: Weekly classes in the Book of Judges at Lincoln Square Synagogue in Manhattan.

- October 2-December 11: A 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.

Upcoming lectures and scholar-in-residence programs

- December 8: Lecture at University of Pennsylvania/Institute University Network. “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 Teaneck.
- January 13: Megillat Esther, at Yeshivat Chovevei Torah.
- January 29-April 2: Weekly classes in the First Book of Samuel at Lincoln Square Synagogue in Manhattan.
- Shabbat February 7-8: Scholar-in-Residence, Yeshiva University.
- Shabbat March 7-8: Scholar-in-Residence, Congregation Shaarei Orah in Teaneck.
- Shabbat, June 20-21: Scholar-in-Residence, Young Israel of Oceanside.

Byline:

Rabbi Hayyim Angel is the National Scholar of the Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals. He is author and editor of ten books and numerous articles. He teaches Tanakh and Jewish Studies at Yeshiva University, and is a highly regarded teacher and lecturer.