National Scholar September Report

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We are about to embark on a year of expansion in our programming for the Institute. We continue to build on our previous successes but also intend to expand our reach and impact throughout the community.

NEW COMMUNAL SYMPOSIA

We are planning two communal symposia over the coming year, with the goal of promoting our core values in conjunction with respectful communal dialogue and conversation. **On Sunday, October 21**, we will launch this new initiative with a conversation about "Conversion to Judaism: What is Best for the Jewish People?" The panel will feature our Founder and Director, Rabbi Marc D. Angel, who has placed the issue of conversion at the heart of his work for nearly fifty years. He will be joined by Rabbi Yona Reiss, Head of the Chicago Beth Din and the Director of the Rabbinical Council of America's conversion courts. I will be introducing and moderating the discussion. The program is free and open to the public, and will be held from 10:00 am-12:00 pm at Lincoln Square Synagogue in Manhattan (68th and Amsterdam Avenue). For more information, please see the flyer at https://www.jewishideas.org/conversion-judaism-0.

We will hold another conversation panel on **Sunday, February 10**, on an exploration of what we can do in our Torah communities and educational systems to increase the fostering of ethical behavior and attitudes.

TEACHER TRAINING: SEPHARDIC INITIATIVE

We have been significantly increasing our Teacher Training programs as we spread our vision into the Day School system and communities throughout the country. Two major areas of expansion this past year have been with our new Sephardic Initiative and the Ben Porat Yosef Yeshiva Day School in Paramus, New Jersey.

The history and culture of Sephardim, Middle Eastern and North African Jews are relatively unknown to large numbers of Jews. And when attempts are made to be inclusive, they generally relate to foods and music...and almost never to intellectual and spiritual contributions.

The Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals has launched a "Sephardic Initiative," to promote a greater inclusiveness and "wholeness" in Jewish education.

Our next Teacher Training will be held on **Sunday, November 4**, in cooperation with the Sephardic Educational Center and Ben Porat Yosef Yeshiva Day School. It will be geared to teachers of grades 3-8. This conference will provide practical information on how inclusiveness in Jewish education can be enhanced. Teachers engage in discussion and serious learning. Teachers will be given publications to help them in their own study of Sephardic/pan-Sephardic civilization. Teachers will write reports on how they have gone on to implement a Sephardic component in their classes, and these reports will then be circulated among the group so that they can learn from each other.

For more information, and to contribute to this effort, please see our website, https://www.jewishideas.org/article/our-institutes-sephardic-initiative.

UNIVERSITY NETWORK

We are off to a new year at our University Network, and look forward to reporting on the programs run by our Campus Fellows. We are excited to welcome our newest Fellows:

Yona Benjamin (Columbia University)

Mikey Pollack (University of Maryland)

Aryeh Roberts (University of Maryland)

Ora Friedman (Stern College, Yeshiva University)

Yoni Gutenmacher (University of Pennsylvania)

Daniel Fridman (Yale University)

For more about our University Network, see our website at https://www.jewishideas.org/university-network

COMMUNUAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

I continue to run educational programs to promote our core values in the broader community. This coming year, I am scheduled to be a scholar-in residence in the **DAT Minyan, Denver Colorado** (September 30-October 2), the **Young Israel of Teaneck**, New Jersey (November 30-December 1), and the **Boca Raton Synagogue** in Florida (March 22-23).

I also am developing new adult education mini-courses for the fall:

On Wednesday, September 5, I gave a High Holiday class on the Books of Jonah and Joel at Lamdeinu, Teaneck.

On Tuesdays, October 9, 16, 23, 30, 2:00-3:00 pm, I will give a four-part series on the **Religious Significance of the Land of Israel in the Bible**. In this series, we will get to the heart of the central values in the Torah and the Prophets pertaining to the people of Israel and the Land of Israel. Through the study of key biblical texts and rabbinic interpretations, we will build a foundation that informs all later discussions of the religious significance of the Land of Israel for the Jewish people. Classes are run by the Sephardic Community Alliance, and

are held at Congregation Beth Torah, 1061 Ocean Parkway in Brooklyn, New York.

On Mondays, November 5, 12, 19, 26, 1:00-2:15 pm, I will give a four-part series on the **Books of Ezra-Nehemiah**: Ezra and Nehemiah: A New Kind of Leadership. An in-depth look at Tanakh's last two leaders. We will consider the primary texts in Ezra-Nehemiah, and see how Ezra and Nehemiah each helped shape the future of Judaism after prophecy stopped. This course is with Lamdeinu, Teaneck, and held at 950 Queen Anne Road, in Teaneck, New Jersey. For registration information, go to www.lamdeinu.org.

As always, thank you for all of your support, and we will continue to spread our vision to educators, university students, and the broader Jewish community in the coming year.

Shanah Tovah,

Rabbi Hayyim Angel

National Scholar

Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals