Campus Fellows Report: November 2019

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Rabbi Hayyim Angel

To our members and friends

One of our core mission projects is our University Network, through which we reach hundreds of university students across North America and beyond. We send journals, electronic resources, and other materials to these thoughtful students so that they can engage with high-level content as they build their own religious identities. We are thrilled that our Campus Fellows have been running a wide variety of programs to promote our ideology and to engage students of all backgrounds. It has been a singular pleasure for me to work with these fellows as a component of being the National Scholar of the Institute. Here are some of the Fellows' latest reports. If you know of college students who would like to sign up to our University Network (it is free), please have them go to our website, https://www.jewishideas.org/civicrm/contribute/transact?reset=1&id=9. If you know of students who would like to take a leadership role as a Campus Fellow, please have them contact me at hangel@jewishideas.org and I will help them with the process. We thank the Rabbi Arthur A. Jacobovitz Institute for their ongoing support of our University Network and our Campus Fellows Program.

Thank you and have a Happy Thanksgiving

Rabbi Hayyim Angel, National Scholar

Yona Benjamin (Columbia)

I plan to hold sessions which discuss the relationship between traditional Jewish learning/practice and the insights and methods of academic Talmud study. I believe by using my studies of the Mishnah as the topic, my events will be accessible to a wider swath of the community. While currently still being

planned, I hope to have one session discussing the benefits of putting a text like the Mishnah in its historic context (contrasting modern work with the letter of Sherira Gaon.) And a second whose exact content is not set but will hopefully deal with how we learn differently from manuscripts than from printed texts.
The goals of these events will be to expose participants to academic resources, but to show how ultimately these tools can enrich and work in concert with many traditional sources and insights. I hope to use these discussions as a way of broaching broader topics about Jewish ideas and religiosity in the context of the secular university.

Matt Jelen (Harvard)
We currently have two events on the agenda for the Institute over the next month.

The first is a lecture on Bishul Akum with Rabbi Barry Dolinger, Rav HaMachshir of a few local restaurants. It's an especially interesting event because his *hashgacha* is the subject of much debate in the Boston community, specifically with regard to Rabbi Dolinger's views on the issue of Bishul Akum.

The second is a Friday night Q&A dessert reception with Rabbi Jeremy Wieder and Dr. Chaviva Levin, who will be joining our community for Shabbos in two weeks' time.

Mikey Pollack, Aryeh Roberts (Maryland)
Over Simchat Torah we ran our first Jewish Institute of Ideas and Ideals event- Torah Dash. During a break in shul we gathered over 100 people to give short dvar Torah's on each and every parsha in the Torah. We bought Starbucks coffee to help enhance the event.

Zachary Tankel (McGill)
Our first Institute event was a shiur by David Chaim Wallach, a Judaic studies teacher at one of the local Jewish high schools. The shiur was about confronting our sins in the process of teshuva.

We are planning to bring in another speaker in late November. Although we haven't confirmed yet, there is a student in Montreal who is connected with a rabbi named Eli Deutsch from the Mizrachi World Movement in Israel, and since he will be visiting Canada, we are hoping to host him.

Sara Evans (Queens College)
I am planning to have a speaker from Israel hopefully come in to speak at Queens college in November that has never spoken here before and I am hoping to have a discussion on a Shabbat afternoon also hopefully in November, but haven't decided on the topic yet.

Raffi Levi and Benjamin Nechmad (Rutgers)
We conducted a rather meaningful conversation on how we the Torah portrays our leaders as imperfect which makes them much easier to relate to as human beings. It also allows their messages and lessons to be conveyed in a much more relatable manner. We used the recent article from Rabbi Marc Angel as an inspiration and guide for the event.

Marta Dubov (Ryerson)
I am currently planning a monthly Rosh Chodesh "High Tea" with a group of young women with the intention to distribute some of the institution's journals and make commentary, share thought on them. I have a location and time roughly planned, and will be promoting the event soon.

Ora Friedman (Stern College for Women, Yeshiva University)
On Tuesday, December 17, Rabbi Gamliel Shmalo will be leading a discussion on "Modern Orthodox Approaches to Faith."

On Wednesday, December 18, Rabbi Besser, teacher at Ma'ayanot Yeshiva High School and dayan on RCA Beit Din of America, will be speaking on "The Halachic Way: The Power and Parameters of Rabbinic Innovation" about whether it's true that if there's a Rabbinic will there's a halachic way? It will touch on many of the sensitive issues like Aguna.

Ari Barbalat (University of Toronto)
For this semester, two programs are planned.

One, in conjunction with the JLIC of Toronto, will be an evening with Yair Rosenberg, discussing Responding to Anti-Semitism Online. It will be held this Thursday evening. Rabbi Aaron Greenberg, who oversees JLIC Toronto, is helping with all the logistics of the event.

Rabbi Greenberg mentioned that he would be open to me doing a session at U of T Hillel in the time slot that he usually reserves for his own Shiur on either November 21 or 28. My intended topic is the missing Yemenite Children Affair in Israeli history, which disproportionately affected religious and traditional Jews. I intend to address its moral importance and contemporary significance. I intend to include contemporary Israeli multimedia on the affair, such as the materials of "Edut Amram," one of Israel's central activist organizations pertaining to this issue, and other Israeli sources as available.

Daniel Fridman (Yale University)
I'm currently planning a multi-week discussion-based series where the Jewish community could come together to discuss questions related to Orthodoxy in the modern world (this can include the meaning of being Orthodox and how that may have changed over time, increasing diversity within the Orthodox community and the challenges this brings and how to address them, halakhic leniency vs. stringency in face of a rapidly changing modern world, etc.). This event could include different sources, both traditional and contemporary, as well as student-led discussions.

Yoni Abrams, Steven Gotlib (Yeshiva University)
We have Rabbi Barry Kornblau (from Queens) approved by the University to speak about Ecology and the Environment and to lead a discussion about the Jewish imperative to care about these issues. We want a date in November, but we haven't finalized that date yet.