

Winter 2010

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## Between Us - בינינו

*by Dr. Shuly Rubin Schwartz, Dean*

Today, in the midst of the 2009-10 academic year, it's hard to imagine the landscape of higher Jewish learning a century ago. Today, young men and women looking for advanced Jewish learning and professional training are presented with myriad offerings. Just 100 years ago, in 1909, such choices were severely limited, especially for women. At that time, in the midst of the mass migration of Jews from Eastern Europe, American Jewish leaders felt an obligation to provide young Jewish men and women with opportunities to obtain a modern, sophisticated Jewish education comparable to the secular education that many would gain at local colleges. These leaders also felt compelled to prepare a select group of young men and women to serve as future educators—who would transmit the richness of Jewish life and culture to the next generation. When Solomon Schechter appointed Mordecai M. Kaplan as the founding dean of JTS' undergraduate division in 1909, the Teachers Institute, this is precisely what he had in mind. And thanks to Kaplan's initiative, creativity and passion, the Teachers Institute fulfilled this mandate.

My maternal grandfather—Jacob Pearlstein, z"l,—was one of the lucky individuals who benefited from this education. A 1920 graduate of the Teachers Institute as well as a graduate of City College, Pearlstein was born in eastern Europe, immigrated to the United States from Russia with his family when he was a child, and got a meager Heder

education on the Lower East Side. He enrolled at JTS to deepen his Jewish knowledge and improve his Hebrew. He subsequently attended Tulane University Medical School and served as a family doctor in Brooklyn for decades. But it was his education at the Teachers Institute that solidified a devotion to Zionism, Hebrew language, and Jewish culture. This enriched his life, and these passions he successfully passed on to his children and grandchildren.

The concept of earning two bachelor degrees simultaneously was formalized through the creation in 1953 of the Joint Program with our neighbor, Columbia University. At its inception, the notion of the Joint Program as a pre-rabbinic program predominated. Columbia's president Grayson Kirk hailed the program as a symbol of "the growing awareness by both institutions of the need for a broad liberal arts background" for individuals who will "guide our country's spiritual life."

But, over time, that vision once again broadened. In 1979, JTS formalized its dual-degree program with New York's premier women's college, Barnard.

Today, though some men—and now women—still come to one of our dual-degree programs to prepare to enter rabbinical school, our mission is closer to what drew my grandfather to study here. We're dedicated to more broadly preparing young men and women for responsi-



ble citizenship and leadership. And our dual-degree programs remain unique in providing students with the opportunity to forge a unique synthesis in their education.

This year, as we celebrate the [100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Teachers Institute](#)—the precursor to List College—and the [30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Double Degree Program with Barnard College](#), we can take great pride in our legacy while gaining inspiration to continue our work. As JTS's undergraduate school enters its second century, we at List remained ever committed to providing a first-rate Jewish education to young men and women, enabling them to synthesize their American and Jewish identities. When I look at List College students and alumni, I know that I am seeing the current and future lay and professional leaders who will shape the Jewish future. ■

**DON'T MISS**

*Adi Segal (JP '11)  
biked 315 miles in  
Israel for coexistence  
and the environment*

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**Hannah Goodman**  
Atlanta, GA

*“I have never seen communities come together so quickly to support one another.”*

## Losing a piece of ourselves

### **Hannah Goodman, DD '12**

*Hannah Goodman (DD '12) is a long-time camper and staff member at Camp Ramah Darom in Georgia, where she met Rafi Lehmann, a JTS rabbinical student. Hannah writes about the way Rafi touched her life before his sudden and tragic death in September.*

One of the many reasons why I love camp is the close sense of community that is formed over the short weeks my friends and I spend there together. Some of the most influential people in my life—academically, spiritually, and morally—are people I have met at camp, and many of my best friends to this day are “camp friends.” With everyone’s crazy schedules and the stress of college, however, talking to these friends who are now spread out all across the country is not always the easiest task, and getting calls from them is always a treat.

One day, while sitting in class, I got a call from a friend of mine. I was excited to see she had called and couldn’t wait for class to end so I could call her back. A few minutes later another friend called, and when a third person called me, one whom I had not talked to in over a year, a knot began to tighten in my stomach. When class finally ended, I immediately checked my e-mail and saw two messages, one from JTS and one from Camp Ramah Darom, announcing *Baruch Dayan Ha’Emet*, “Blessed be the one of truth,” the traditional announcement of death. Rafael Lehmann, a fifth-year Rabbinical student at JTS and my Rosh Eidah (unit head) at Camp Ramah Darom for two summers, had died.

Rafi was not a List College student himself, but his younger

brother, Elie, had graduated from the Joint Program last spring. Rafi was an integral part of the greater JTS community, as he embodied the soul and mission of JTS, a love and passion for Judaism, and a desire to incorporate Jewish teachings into everyday life. Rafi taught every person with whom he came into contact. He had a knack for understanding other people’s views and opinions, and he used that ability to reach out to individuals even when he was teaching to a large group. Remembering Rafi’s upbeat attitude and compassion for others left all who knew him, either intimately or distantly, in shock after hearing the news.

Immediately, questions of why and how were circulating among both the JTS and Ramah Darom communities—the two communities which Rafi and I shared. I talked to more of my camp friends over the next few days than I had in any previous period I can remember. We were all struggling with a way to cope with the news. Rafi had not only been the head of our very tight unit, but since he had been with us for two summers, we all felt he was truly a part of our eidah, our memories, our experiences, and ourselves. Thus, by losing Rafi, we all felt as though we had lost a little piece of ourselves.

I have also never seen communities come together so quickly to support one another as I did in the days following Rafi’s death. Professors, administrators, and students from all five JTS schools made the trip up to Boston for Rafi’s funeral and made shiva calls to his parents, brother, and fiancée. Those who went represented not only

themselves, but also the entire JTS community. The fact that professors sat beside students on the four-hour bus ride provided by the school showed me a community which not only teaches Jewish ideals, but one that applies them in times of need. In the weeks following Rafi’s death JTS offered memorial services, counseling, and Mishnah study in Rafi’s honor. The community came together to help one another and remember a student, classmate, friend, and mentor.

In a similar fashion, my camp community came together. Since that day, a number of groups have been collecting money to donate to Camp Ramah Darom, an organization about which Rafi was distinctly passionate. It was amazing to me to see how all the members of my eidah were able to support one another after we heard the news. Though we were each affected differently and individually by Rafi, we came together in his honor to make a donation to camp in his name. We may be the eidah that used to drive him crazy, but we also recognize that we are truly in debt to him for our growth during the two summers he fearlessly led us. At camp, Rafi was an iconic figure who moved through the ranks of the staff from counselor to Rosh Eidah to Rosh Tefillah (head of prayer), a position which suited his love of Judaism and teaching. Though I and everyone who knew Rafi are sad that we will never be able to learn from him again, I know he would be happy to see the community and legacy he helped build and the number of people he touched in his all-too-short lifetime. ■

# Professor Interview

## Dr. Jonathan Milgram, Professor of Talmud



Dr. Milgram, who won the 2008-2009 List College Professor of the Year award, recently sat down with us to talk about his love of teaching Talmud. Dr. Milgram is himself a graduate of the Joint Program.

my aspirations to be a professional musician. I played trumpet since childhood and was encouraged by my mentors to pursue music as a career, but my parents disapproved. So, I looked for a program that would push me academically, providing both an intense Jewish experience that was intellectually honest and a strong degree of rigor in secular studies as well. The Joint Program between Columbia and JTS, therefore, seemed tailor-made for me.

**What did you study, and who were some of your Talmud professors? What did JTS give you that you carried with you after graduating?**

I majored in Talmud at JTS and in Comparative Literature (focusing on German and Latin American Literature) at Columbia. My professors at JTS included several of my colleagues today in the Talmud department: Professors Israel Francus (emeritus), Judith Hauptman, Richard Kalmin, David Kraemer, Burton Visotzky and Dov Zlotnick (emeritus). My eventual PhD advisor at Bar Ilan University, Shamma Friedman, is also a long-time Seminary professor.

My involvement in JTS and Columbia communities was not only academic, however. I studied voice at Columbia, sang in Pizmon

(Columbia/Barnard's co-ed Jewish a cappella group) and was a member of the Alpha Epsilon Pi fraternity. In addition, and probably most important, I met my wife Adina (Levine) while here. She was a student in the Double Degree program with Barnard.

JTS gave me two things which propelled both my professional life as a professor of Jewish Studies and my personal commitment to Judaism. The strong Hebrew language skills provided by years of study at JTS really helped me in graduate school in Israel. And JTS's model of Jewish belief and practice – the soul being nurtured by the cerebral – continues to enrich my own spiritual journey.

**Do you think you are especially qualified to teach List College students since you were once one yourself? What is it you love about teaching Talmud?**

I think that coming from a similar background as some of my students—and watching them search at JTS for many of the same things I once did—does help me understand and better frame the material that I teach. I care deeply about the material and about my students. I want to make sure my students understand why Talmud is an essential discipline to study even in the 21st century and why it remains relevant to intellectual and spiritual growth. I want to keep it fun, interesting, and immediate. I want to make clear the relevance and practicality of Talmudic wisdom. I think the students have responded positively to my efforts. I was extremely touched this past year when the List College student body voted me *Professor of the Year*. ■

**What initially drew you to JTS when you were a student?**

I went to public school in south Florida and became more interested in Jewish practice and study due to the dynamism of the local Conservative synagogue's rabbi, Rabbi Avi Kapnek. I did not come from a religious home at all, but my parents, who emigrated from Venezuela, came from an institutionally traditional community and responded positively to my interest. To be sure, they were more supportive of my desire to be involved in Jewish studies than in me pursuing

“I want to make sure my students understand why Talmud is an essential discipline to study even in the 21st century and why it remains relevant to intellectual and spiritual growth.”

**At-a-glance:**

Dr. Jonathan Milgram

- Educated at Columbia, JTS, Yeshiva University, and Bar-Ilan University
- Coordinator of JTS's Saul Lieberman Institute for Talmudic Research, 1997-2003
- Assistant editor for Talmud and Rabbinics for Encyclopedia Judaica, second edition, 2005
- Former assistant rabbi at Park East Synagogue
- Has conducted extensive research into inheritance law as presented in Tractate Bekhorot, chapter 8
- [Dr. Milgram's bio on the JTS website](#)
- [New Jersey Jewish Standard article on Dr. Milgram receiving Professor of the Year honors](#)

## List College in Action Around the World



**Adi Segal**  
Bergenfield, NJ

### Adi Segal (JP '11), studying in Israel, bikes 315 miles for peace and the environment

**PRESS RELEASE:**  
ARAVA INSTITUTE  
FOR ENVIRON-  
MENTAL STUDIES,  
KIBBUTZ KETURA,  
ISRAEL

*Adi Segal (JP '11) spent the fall semester on Kibbutz*

*Ketura at the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies; this spring, he is studying at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. In November, Adi participated in a weeklong bike trip throughout Israel to raise funds for peace, partnership, and the environment. The following is a series of excerpts from the press release about his adventure.*

Kibbutz Ketura, Israel – On November 3, Adi Segal set out on a journey of a lifetime. Following his passions for Israel, coexistence, and the environment, Segal decided raise money for the Arava Institute and Hazon by participating in the Israel Ride. Along with 40 other participants, he rode from the northern city of Tzfat and ended at the southern border in Eilat.

In describing his experience Segal stated: “This Ride provided a very unique vantage point of Israel. I’ve seen most of Israel in many different ways - small groups, large groups, hiking, biking, driving - but rolling through the country on a bicycle is an extraordinary experience. To physically move yourself, at your own speed, through the land, allows for a whole new perspective. You better appreciate the height of mountains, the geographic and climatic diversity of the small area, surrounding nature, and especially the diversity of the people who live within.”

Segal also studied this fall at the Arava Institute located on Kibbutz Ketura on the Israeli-Jordanian border. It is a multi-faceted program; different from any other study abroad experience. The Institute is about the environment; it is about peace; it is about the Middle East; it is about living in the desert, and living on a kibbutz. Classmates and dorm mates are Israeli, Palestinian, Jordanian, American, Jews, Muslims and Christians.

In discussing his semester, Segal remarked, “Being at the Institute is phenomenal. To live in the desert, in the middle of nowhere, with Arabs, Israelis and other internationals is truly amazing. Since there is *REALLY* nothing else to do here, we have plenty of time to hang-out, become friends, share interests, and *THEN* discuss the things that may divide us. I believe this is a unique experience that will greatly influence my life.” ■



Follow Adi’s adventures from day one through his spring semester in Jerusalem on his [blog](#).

**Thanks to our donors! Elie Schwartz Memorial Scholarship**

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## Alumni News: Where are our List College grads?

### 1990-2003

**Ezra Androphy (JP '00)** and Gail Androphy announce the birth of their daughter, Sara Eliana Androphy, on May 27, 2009...**Josh Blumenfeld (JP '99)** and Michelle Witman, along with big sister Shayna, announce the birth of their second daughter, Keren Eliana Blumenfeld on May 28, 2009...**Nava (Edelman) Cohen (JP '98)** and **Adam Cohen (JP '98)**, along with big sisters Galya and Hila, announce the birth of their third child, Erez, on April 30, 2009...**Anat Dotan (JP '01)** married Hagay Amar on October 1, 2009 in Beit Guvrin, Israel...**Ilana Garber (DD '00)** and Adam Berkowitz announce the birth of their son, Noam Avizemer Berkowitz, on July 23, 2009. Ilana is a rabbi at Beth El Temple in West Hartford, CT... **Faya Gene (JP '03, Davidson '05)** recently became engaged to Brad Hoffman. They plan to marry in May 2010 in Miami, FL...**Jodi Hirsch Rein (JP '02)** and Steven Rein (Rabbinical School '09) announced the birth of their son, Ari Lev Rein on October 8, 2009...**Shanna (Ackerman) Hocking (JP '01)** and Matt Hocking announce the birth of their son, Eli Ronen Hocking, on March 18, 2009...**Lesley Hoffman (JP '03, Davidson '05)** recently became engaged to Matt Goldenberg. They plan to marry in fall 2010 in St. Louis, MO. Lesley is the principal of the Sutton Place Synagogue's Jackson Religious School. They live in NYC...**Jenny Labendz (DD '02, Graduate School '10)** recently became engaged to Zalman New-



field. They plan to marry in summer 2010. Jenny earned her MPhil in 2009 and is currently working on her dissertation. She plans to complete her PhD in Talmud at JTS in May 2010...**Uri Monson (JP '91)** was named one of the ten most influential Jewish leaders in Philadelphia by *Inside Magazine*, in its "Best of Philly" issue. *Philadelphia Magazine* named Uri "Wonk of the Year," noting that, "In these desperate times, the executive director of the Pennsylvania Intergovernmental Cooperation Authority dispenses wisdom from under his yarmulke like a good-government rabbi."...**Iris Paltin (JP '03)** earned a PhD in Clinical Psychology from Fordham University in May 2009. She relocated to Maryland in fall 2009 to begin a Post-Doctoral residency in pediatric neuropsychology at Children's National Medical Center, and in November 2009 she married Daryl

Guar...**Hila Ratzabi (DD '03)** had her first book of poetry, *The Apparatus of Visible Things*, published by Finishing Line Press (2009). She also published her first article in the *Forward*, on being Jewish in an interfaith relationship (<http://www.forward.com/articles/116712/>)...**David Schnitzer (JP '01)** recently started a new job at the Pentagon in the Secretary of Defense's public liaison and community relations office, where he will be working as a political appointee on special events and other outreach projects. David spent 2007 and 2008 in DC and Chicago as the deputy research director for the Democratic National Committee. He currently lives in Washington, DC...**Sarah Weiss-Poland (JP '99, Davidson '03)** had two ceremonies/prayers published on [www.ritualwell.org](http://www.ritualwell.org): *Blessing to Heal Infertility* and *Cremation and Burial Service*...**Shira (Tropp) Osher (JP '02)** married Noam Osher in Rehovot, Israel on Thanksgiving Day, 2009. Just before her wedding, she also became a board certified physician in Internal Medicine. ...**Ronit (Siegel) Berger (DD '97)** and Tadd Berger announced the birth of their third child, Tamar Sasha, on May 23, 2009. She joins big brother Noah and sister Penina. Ronit lives in Israel with her family.

### 2004-2006

**Lauren Appelbaum (JP '05)** recently became engaged to Jonathan Fusfield. They plan to marry in June 2010. In November 2009, Lauren joined The Israel Project in Washington, DC, as its Media and Special Projects Coordinator...**Eli (Kaiser-Blueth) Engler (JP '06)** became the General Manager of Goodfriend Catering Company, a kosher catering company, in April 2009. She lives in Atlanta, GA with her husband, Elie... **Yaffa Garber (DD '07)** and Ravid Tilles (Rabbinical School '13) were married on July 2, 2009 in Quincy, MA. Yaffa is the Life Cycle Coordinator at Congregation Bnai Jeshurun, and she began Yeshiva University's Wurzweiler School of Social Work in fall 2009... **Ari Greenberg (JP '04)** and Tamar Kornblum (CC '04) recently became engaged. Ari is the CEO of [Baveo.com](http://Baveo.com) that helps parents create baby blogs...**Katie Hanus (JP '06)** earned her JD from Touro College's Jacob D. Fuchsberg

## Alumni News, continued

Law Center in May 2009 and recently passed the NY State Bar. Katie recently became engaged to Dr. Matthew Doscher. They plan to marry in spring 2010. She is currently working for Allstate Insurance...**Noah Liben (JP '05)** and Nessa Heilpern announce the birth of their daughter, Ayelet Batya, on June 17, 2009. Noah graduated from Fordham Law School in May 2009 and joined Mayer Brown LLP in January 2010 as a litigation associate. He has been volunteering at the Jewish Community Relations Council in NYC for the past few months...**Doron Kenter (JP '05)** – recently became engaged to Jennifer Pavane. Doron joined Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP in fall 2009... **Josh Mohrer (JP '04)** recently became engaged to Petra Cramer. They will be married in August 2010 in Los Angeles, CA and will continue to live in NYC. Josh entered the part-time MBA program at NYU's Stern School of Business in September 2009...**Yael Krieger (JP '04)** married Joshua Ladon on January 17, 2010 in Tampa, FL. Yael completed her studies at Pardes and is currently working on curriculum development and grant writing for The Bible Raps Project, while continuing to learn at the Conservative Yeshiva in Jerusalem. ...**Michal (Raucher) Shear (JP '05)** won a Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Grant. Michal is spending 2009-10 in Israel researching the ways in which Orthodox Jewish women in Israel understand their pregnancies. Michal is pursuing a PhD in Religion, with a focus in Bioethics, from Northwestern University...**Andrea Wershof Schwartz (JP '04)** is in her last year at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine; having just returned from a year in Israel, she and her husband Charlie Schwartz (Rabbinical School '11) serve as the List College Jewish Life Directors along with MSRH RDs **Shira (Steinberg) Abraham (JP '06)** and Steven Abraham (Rabbinical School '11)... **Aliza (Slosberg) Weinstock (JP '05, Davidson '06)** married Stuart Weinstock (CC '06, School of the Arts '09) on August 9, 2009. Aliza teaches at Solomon Schechter in Manhattan...**Yael Weinstock (JP '05)** married Michael Mashbaum on January 14, 2010 in Los Angeles, CA. Yael made Aliyah in October 2006. She is completing coursework toward an MA from Hebrew University in Eastern European History and is currently the coordinator for the Bogrei Nativ Association and also works in the Internet Department for the International School of Holocaust Studies...**Seth Wolkofsky (JP '06)** recently became engaged to Adeena Gabriel (BC '05). They plan to marry in August 2010. Seth is studying law at Seton Hall University and living in NYC. ...**Hillary Yohlin (JP '04)** and Matt Waller became engaged on the beach in Ocean City, NJ at sunrise on Rosh Hashanah morning. They will be married on June 27, 2010 in Turks and Caicos. They will celebrate with family and friends in Philadelphia on July 17, 2010!

## 2007-2009

**Ariel Beinart (DD '07, Rabbinical School '14)** and **Matthew Russo (JP '07)** recently became engaged and plan to marry in August 2010. Ariel began JTS Rabbinical School in fall 2009, and Matt works for Teach for America... **Amanda (Harris) Haberman (JP '07)** and **Jeffrey Haberman (JP '06)** were married on August 2, 2009. Both Amanda and Jeff are completing their third year at Emory Law School...**Danielle Klein (JP '08)** began an MA in Interior Design and Architecture at Drexel University in June 2009... **Rachel Lipsky (JP '09)** will enroll in Stony Brook School of Dental Medicine in Fall 2010...**Anya Manning (DD '07)** and **Elie Lehman (JP '09)** recently became engaged. Anya is completing her second year as an Insight Fellow, and Elie is a paralegal at Epstein & Weil in NYC. Anya was also selected for the Nahum Goldmann Fellowship, a special institute aimed at nurturing a new generation of Jewish communal leadership across the world. Anya and Elie live in NYC and plan to marry on June 20, 2010...**Noah Mencow (JP '08)** and **Shira Hichenberg** were married on November 1, 2009 in Maryland. Noah is a preschool educator at the JCC in Manhattan and also teaches at several supplemental religious schools in NYC...**Justin Rosen (JP '08)** recently became engaged to Avi Smolen, and they plan to marry in fall 2010. Justin is completing the Insight Fellowship this year and plans to pursue a graduate degree in theology – he has been admitted to Cambridge University... **Nicole Yeroshalmi (JP '09)** recently became engaged to David Berman (CC '08). Nicole is a first-year medical student at University of Texas, Southwestern Medical School...**Chavie Wexelberg-Clouser (JP '07)** is a Donor Relations Associate at Smile Train in NYC...

### CONDOLENCES to...

**Elie Lehmann (JP '09)** on the death of his brother Rafael Lehmann

**Justin Rosen (JP '08)** on the death of his grandfather

**Marielle Gross (JP '09)** on the death of her grandfather

**Jonah Rank (JP '10)** on the death of his grandfather

**Ariella (JP '09)** and **Adina (DD '11) Rosen** on the death of their grandmother

**Leslie Goldress (Seminary College '68)** on the death of her mother

**The family of Golda Och ז"ל** (Teachers Institute '57)

**The family of Professor Yochanan Muffs ז"ל** (TI '52, RS '58) Myer and Fannie Rapaport Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus of Bible and Religion



**REACHING NEW HEIGHTS** ■ List College juniors Ilana Krakowski, Jacob Levenfeld, Adina Rosen, Adi Segal, and Lauren Carel are spending the semester studying in Jerusalem.

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