



## MIT Hillel Update



L'shana tova from MIT Hillel!

From Cambridge to Jerusalem and throughout our Jewish community, we offer you best wishes for a happy, healthy, meaningful new year.

**High Holy Day service schedule on-line: all are welcome!**

The Students, Board, and Staff of MIT Hillel

### Executive Director's Update



calendars coincide.

Shalom, shalom! Welcome and welcome back! As I walk around campus this week, it is inspiring to see so many fresh, bright-eyed first-year students already at ease running from place to place. New dreams, new ideas, new beginnings. For all the craziness the overlap of a new academic year and a new Jewish year can cause, it's meaningful to me to have these two

It's also wonderful to be entering year two as MIT Hillel's Executive Director, and to be able to appreciate this excitement as a "veteran" – sure I experienced it all 15 years ago as a chemistry graduate student, but one is aware of different things as a rabbi and professional than as a student. There's a bit more standing on the balcony and seeing the larger picture.

I look back at year one with a lens of accomplishment, of pride in an incredible and growing Jewish student community – growing in numbers and in involvement. Hillel staff built more meaningful one-to-one relationships with students and helped more Jews consciously explore their Jewish connections. We had an eight-fold increase in Birthright Israel participation. The annual Latke-Hamentaschen debate again filled 26-100. A new luncheon lecture program, Leading Jewish Minds @ MIT brought together upwards of 75 faculty, staff, and local alumni throughout the year. An updated, rejuvenated website highlights it all: [mit.edu/hillel](http://mit.edu/hillel) (currently including High Holy Day information under the "Spotlight" section on the top-right).

And from my longer-view I also see into 5771. We're laying the groundwork for FYSH

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### MIT Spotlight:

#### Menschen of Mention



*Sophie Lee '11, MIT Hillel Board Student President*

I am Sophie Lee, originally from the San Francisco Bay Area and a rising Junior majoring in Course 10 (Chemical Engineering) with a minor in Course 3 (Material Science). I am currently the Hillel Student Board President. Outside of Hillel, I am a TA for the Experimental Studies Group, have a UROP in the Electrochemical Energy Lab, play Women's Rugby and do lighting for theater and dance productions.

MIT Hillel is about much more than Shabbat Dinners or High Holiday services. Whether it is an interesting class or just relaxing during Joe with the Jews (free coffee/hot cocoa and lounging in the Hillel Center on Tuesday afternoons), Hillel has offered me an amazing Jewish

(First-Year Students at Hillel) events this fall, especially with the help of our new Jewish Educator, Julia Appel, a fifth-year rabbinical student at Hebrew College. Eliad Shmuel, our Program Director, has been selected for International Hillel's [Leadership and Professional International Development \(LAPID\) Initiative](#), to be trained to inspire students to create their own *tzedek* (social justice) initiatives. An Alternative Spring Break to a Jewish Farm School, to learn sustainable and organic agriculture, is already in the works.

I look forward to using this medium monthly to keep you informed of all that's happening on campus and beyond with MIT Hillel.

Best wishes for a happy, healthy, meaningful new year!

L'shana tova,

Rabbi Michelle Fisher SM '97

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## Torah from Tech



*Our Torah this month is taught by Prof. Daniel Jackson SM '88, PhD '92, Professor in Course 6.*

"Not with you alone do I make this covenant... but both with those standing here with us this day before the Lord our God and with those who are not with us here this day" (Parashat Nitzavim). Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel

asks, "Does one generation have the right to commit all other generations to a covenant?" And, indeed, commentators have been bothered by this since earliest times. Thus the Midrash Tanhuma tells us that we were there -- all of us, all future generations -- at Sinai. For Heschel, Sinai was not just an event that happened once; it is ongoing. Abraham Isaac Kook viewed the Torah as unfolded by progressive revelations; in Tamar Ross's reading, this means that even new ethical realizations, such as feminism, are part of the divine scheme. In contrast, Seforno, the 15th century Italian scholar, preferred a more down-to-earth (and maybe more MIT-relevant) interpretation. For him, the covenant made with future generations is a contingent one; each of us has the opportunity to renew it. At the beginning of this new year, we might thus ask ourselves: What commitments will we choose to make, to our families, to our community, to our people, to our world, and to ourselves? How will we use our MIT education to improve our world?

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## Birthright Israel

### Experience Israel for FREE!

Taglit-Birthright Israel is the **FREE** 10-day Israel experience of a lifetime. Anyone 18 to 26 years old with at least one Jewish parent who has not been on a peer-group Israel trip is eligible.

"When I returned from Israel, I realized I had done more than just visit old historical

community where I could learn and grow these past two years, and as President I hope that I can help to further grow and foster that community.

### What brought you to Hillel in the first place?

College is all about discovering yourself. I first came to Hillel hoping to explore my Jewish identity amongst a diverse group of individuals, and find the sense of Jewish community that I had been seeking in high school.

### Do you see your Jewish identity playing a role in your studies?

I think that my Jewish Identity forms the basis for how I interact with the world. Jewish values such as *Tikkun Olam* are the foundation for my interest in alternative energy and renewable resources.

### How has your MIT experience been enhanced by your Jewish involvement?

I think that my Jewish involvement has helped to keep me balanced while at MIT, allowing me to gain greater perspective and understand that there is more to life than problem sets.

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**Thank you for  
supporting  
MIT Hillel!**

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Your generous support allows us to help keep Jewish life vibrant on the MIT campus!

sites with new friends. I had changed. My personal Jewish identity and connection to the Jewish People had been strengthened.” – *Josh Cohen '12, MIT Birthright trip December 2009*

Registration opens Tuesday, September 14, 10 am ET:

<http://www.israelwithisraelis.com>

See Israel through science and technology: **MIT Birthright Extension!** Offered for the first time as part of this winter's trip. MIT students will have the option to spend several additional days in Israel exploring the country's HiTech: science labs at Israeli universities, entrepreneurial startups by MIT alumni, and/or industrial research companies that offer summer internships to MIT students.

For more information, contact MIT Hillel: [birthright@mit.edu](mailto:birthright@mit.edu)

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## \$4 Shabbat

\$4 Shabbat dinners! Instituted last year with the help of generous parent and alumni support, these dinners are continuing this year – with a new \$100 subscription plan to cover the full year. Last year's success was measured in increased participation numbers and decreased end-of-the week stress.



Email [\\$4shabbat@mit.edu](mailto:$4shabbat@mit.edu) for more information, or call Hillel at 617-253-2982 to register.

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## On the Hillel Calendar

**MIT Registration Day:** Tuesday, September 7

**MIT First Day of Classes:** Wednesday, September 8

**Rosh Hashana:** Wed. evening, September 8-Friday, September 10

**High Holy Day service schedule on-line: all are welcome!**

**Birthright Israel Registration:** September 14, beginning 10 am ET

**Yom Kippur:** Friday evening, September 17-Saturday, September 18

**Sukkot through Simchat Torah:** Wednesday evening September 22-Friday, October 1

**Leading Jewish Minds, Season II Kicks Off:** Friday, October 15, Featuring Prof. Christine Ortiz, Dean of Graduate Education, Director MISTI-Israel



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