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Dear Friend,

When I entered MIT in 2014, getting involved with Hillel wasn't on my radar. Even to this day, I wouldn't call myself "involved" with Hillel. Yet, I have been fortunate to be on a campus where defining your connection to Judaism on your own terms is not only accepted, it's encouraged. In my case, the parts with which I resonate most deeply are the community, heritage, values, and intellectual vitality.

As I write this, I'm about to head to a Shabbat dinner to catch up with friends. Earlier this afternoon, I grabbed my weekly lunch with Rabbi G and a few friends in which we regularly debate major social issues: gun control, abortion, social welfare, and the like. Today we discussed the ethics of gossip and secrecy. Earlier this week, I was talking to the incoming student representative for MIT Hillel's Board of Directors as I transition out of my one-year term. I consider myself to be a Jewish atheist, and the funny thing is that none of this feels religious to me — in fact, none of it is — yet, it's all deeply Jewish.

A survey of some of my Jewish friends confirms that Hillel serves many purposes. Some Hillel favorites:

- Purim on Ice was great to bring people together with a fun activity — *John Deely '19*
- Sitting with friends after Shabbat dinner, talking for hours after everyone has left, about anything and everything — *Hilary Vogelbaum '20*
- Riding a camel on Kresge Oval on Israeli Independence Day was the best day of my freshman year — *Olivia Siegel '20*
- The annual Latke-Hamantaschen debate is a highlight of my school year. Watching my professors argue how quantum physics explains the latke, or why hamantaschen represent musical perfection is both hilarious and educational — *Jonathan Hurowitz '18*

You also understand that the total Hillel experience is greater than the sum of its parts. As we prepare to graduate, my classmates reflected on the lessons learned through Jewish life at MIT:

- Learning leadership skills on Hillel Board — *Abigail Katcoff '18*
- It's really easy and rewarding to become involved with philanthropy, and I want to dedicate even more of my time to philanthropic activities in the future — *Kyle Swanson '18*
- I learned the importance of taking time to relax with a community of friends, even just for Shabbat dinner during a busy week — *Bertie Ancona '18*
- I learned to adapt the weekly Torah lessons to my everyday MIT life — *Evelyn Florentine '18*

Hillel means so many different things for MIT students, yet you can see one thing is constant: Hillel has been a big part of all our experiences. It is for this reason that I have

(over)

already been giving back, and I ask you to continue – or begin – your support of this very meaningful part of campus life.

Thank you!



Drew Bent '18

P.S. [Your gift to MIT Hillel supports](#) Jewish life and student life at the Institute. Contributions fully support Hillel, and are also credited to the MIT Annual Fund.

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