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**Greeting from MIT Hillel
 to Alumni, Parents, and Friends in Cambridge and Beyond...**

Images from our Yom HaAatzmaut Celebrations on Kresge Oval

Festivities included:

The Annual Hummus Taste-off, Camel Rides, Face Painting, Israel booths/activities, Israeli pop music, bouncy-bounce inflatables, free falafel/schwarma, and more!

Executive Director's Update



Camels, on campus! That was the buzz a couple weeks ago for Yom HaAatzmaut, Israel's Independence Day. And, indeed, we celebrated on Kresge Oval in blue and white with blaring Israeli music. Hundreds rode camels, jumped on bouncy-bounce inflatables, ate falafel and schwarma, gathered information about Israel and Israel activities

and travel, and just took pride and joy in the 67th birthday of our Jewish State. This year we moved our Annual Hummus Experience to the springtime Yom HaAatzmaut celebrations, and over 500 passers-by and carnival attendees tasted and voted on student-created hummus spreads (which the camels were not allowed to eat...). This year's winning flavor: "Challah-Peño Hummus, Y'all!" (It had Jalapeño in it).



A couple of students followed up on these campus festivities by participating in the New England AIPAC dinner, and hobnobbing with politicians like our Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker (see right, pictured with Jonathan Hurowitz '18).

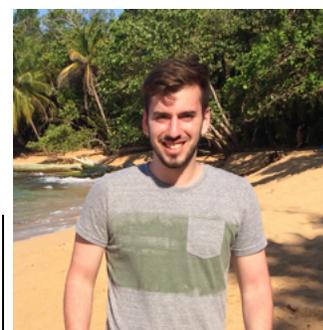
The end of April also saw two memorial events that were honoring MIT heroes. Norman Leventhal '38's passing a month ago was a loss to the entire Boston community. On April 22, speakers - [President Rafael Reif](#), the Mayor, CJP head Barry Shrage, Norman's family members - all beautifully shared the deep and lasting impact Norman's vision and passion had on our city, campus, and communities. He will be sorely missed, and his legacy remains as a tribute to his great dedication and deep commitment to beauty and to people. The MIT Hillel Center is one of many spaces around Boston that bear his name. Hillel students impressed me with their willingness to step forward to serve as ushers at his memorial service. A public thanks to Noam Buckman '16, Stevie Fine '16, Caroline Morganti '16, Ben Niewood '15, Isaac Silberberg '16, Ariel Schwartzman '15, Inbar Yamin '15, and Azaria Zornberg '16 for honoring the founding President of the MIT Hillel Foundation with their presence and warm friendly greetings.



Also dedicated this month was a permanent memorial to Officer Sean Collier of the MIT Police who lost his life in the aftermath of the Marathon bombing two years ago. The new memorial, located between the Koch Institute and Stata Center, is a powerful, exceptionally-thoughtfully-designed tribute to Sean, and every detail is a monument to MIT's values -- community, science, collaboration, vision, greatness. I highly recommend [exploring the photos/articles](#) describing the memorial and how it was designed



Mentshn of Mention



David Wyrobnik '15
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My name is David Wyrobnik and I am member of the class of 2015. I will graduate MIT with a major in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science and minors in Math and Economics. I am currently pursuing a Masters of Engineering in Computer Science here, as well. I was born and raised in the financial capital of Europe, Frankfurt am Main, Germany. My family has been in Germany for three generations, ever since my grandfather, a holocaust survivor of Polish origin, decided to stay in Germany after the war.

Judaism played a significant role in my life in Germany. However, since the Jewish community in Germany is fairly small (for example, I was one of two Jewish graduates in my high school class that had a total of 130 graduates), I had to seek unique opportunities to remain engaged in a Jewish environment. I was very active in the Jewish youth club and in Jewish summer camp, where I was both as a counselee and a counselor.

Math, science, and technology have been fascinating to me ever since I was a young child. I remember asking my father which university

and built. It was an honor to be asked by MIT and the MIT Police to give the invocation at the dedication ceremony on April 29.



May both these men be remembered for a blessing.

My staff and I are keenly aware that the end of the term is approaching. We've taken some senior photos, are prompting graduating students to explore Jewish life beyond graduation, and are making plans for our annual Reunions reception immediately after Commencement (if you are a family member of a graduate or returning for reunions, please drop by the Religious Activities Center!). And as one class makes plans for post-MIT, another eagerly awaits matriculation. Campus Preview Weekend in mid-April brought hundreds of students to campus, dozens of them Jewish pre-frosh, and we excitedly introduced them to Shabbat dinners, ice cream and pizza socials, and just a good, friendly Jewish time. Looking forward to their post-summer arrival on campus.



Finally, we just kicked-off a 6-month strategic planning process for MIT Hillel. We are not just a Hillel, we are a Hillel at and of MIT – and are building upon all our strengths to envision how we can propel Jewish life to an entirely new level and game at MIT. To that end, we are designing a large, stakeholder-wide event on campus for June 23 & 24. If you are/will be in Boston, we would love your participation. Let me know if you can attend.

Wherever you are, you should know spring has arrived in Cambridge. With temperatures in the 60s and 70s this week, we know winter is finally past... and a great positive spirit is contagiously spreading across campus. The AEPi Jewish fraternity recently took great advantage of the weather with their [annual AEPi fundraiser](#) -- Hillel Board of Directors members pried in the face for charity included Prof Daniel Jackson, Dean of Admissions Stu Schmill, Dean of Student Life Department Head Bob Ferrara, as well as current and former undergraduate Hillel presidents Tally Portnoi '17 and Noam Buckman '16 (and a number of other Jewish leaders). It's great to see us re-emerging from the record snows strong, enthusiastic, and optimistic.



L'shalom,
Rabbi Michelle Fisher SM'97
rabbif@mit.edu

Torah from Tech



Our Torah this month is taught by Yael Schein '13 (Course 3). Yael currently works at BNY Mellon and lives in New York, NY. She can be reached at jyschein@gmail.com.

Over the past month, Jews around the world celebrated the holiday of Passover, which commemorates the triumphant Jewish exodus from slavery in Egypt. On Passover, Jews recall that with an "outstretched arm" God famously performed ten miracles to free the Jewish people from a stubborn and oppressive Pharaoh.

Moshe ben Maimon (Rambam, Maimonides), a 12th century rabbi, philosopher and physician, presents one potential explanation for the miracles in the bible. Rambam claims that miracles are defined not as violations or cessations of natural law, but rather events consistent with nature. With Rambam's definition in mind, it is interesting to investigate events in Jewish history commonly believed to oppose the rules of nature. How could it be that not one of the ten plagues violated 8.01, 5.111, or 7.012?! [Guide for the perplexed non-alumni: those are all required science courses.] One might argue that such a view not only contradicts the bible but also intentionally circumvents faith in God by undermining His supernatural abilities. (It is due to these types of arguments that Rambam's books were banned and burned by Jews during his lifetime.)

Richard Gray presents one narrative for the plagues in Egypt which may be aligned with the Rambam's view of miracles. Paleo-climatologists believe that after a period of favorable climate a drought struck Egypt. This drought and rising temperatures caused the Nile to dry up, leading to the slowing and muddying of the river. As the water slowed, bacteria known as "Burgundy Blood algae" (*Oscillatoria*) could have stained the water, which would have made it appear bloody (Plague One). These scientists similarly claim that the toxic algae would speed the hormonal development of tadpoles, causing a dramatic increase in the number of frogs (Plague Two). As the frogs died, mosquitoes and flies would have come en masse, causing Plagues Three and Four, lice and flies. Flies/mosquitoes would have multiplied and caused boils as well as spread disease among livestock (Plagues Five and Six). Scientists are similarly able to explain Plagues Seven, Eight, Nine, and Ten as a result of a volcanic eruption.

At MIT, we work to better understand the natural laws by which the universe operates and for this reason Rambam's presentation of the occurrence of miracles initially appears enticing – no violation of nature is necessary. Ironically, while the Rambam's definition of miracles appears to align with natural law, in certain ways the spontaneous series of events necessary for the ten plagues to have occurred seems as unbelievable as the cessation of natural law. The Rambam's explanation of miracles is

was considered the top technological school in the world, to which he replied "probably MIT". I dreamt of studying abroad at a top-tier technological school, and MIT had both the academic excellence and location I was looking for (it was far enough from home). My first visit to MIT was during campus preview weekend (CPW); this was also my first trip to the US. I soon realized that the people I met were the type of people I would want to surround myself for the next four years of my life.

I wanted to stay connected with my Jewish identity in my new home at MIT, and I knew that Hillel would allow me to do exactly that. I regularly attend Hillel events including Shabbat dinners, holiday services and celebrations, and social events. In addition, I am a member of AEPi (the one Jewish fraternity on campus) and the fencing varsity team. During my time at MIT, I also got the opportunity to visit Israel, both through an internship at Google via MISTI Israel, and ConneCTech, a program that Hillel offers that connects MIT students with Technion students. It is very special to me to have so many options to stay connected with my Jewish identity, and I am grateful for the relationships I was able to form right here at MIT.

Thank you for supporting MIT Hillel!

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



therefore not any less awe-inspiring; rather, he presents a deeply rooted faith-based view of God's intervention into reality without violating the rules of nature which define our lives.

MIT Hillel's 2015 Annual Fund

Add to Jewish life @ MIT!



To our current and future supporters:

MIT gathers all of its development professionals on a quarterly basis to learn together. Even though I am employed by MIT Hillel and not by MIT, I am included as a colleague in these meetings, and it is a welcome opportunity to connect with my partners across campus. These meetings can be quite inspiring, and they provide an opportunity to learn about what is happening on campus that I might not experience directly – in labs, in Kendall Square development, in campus facilities, etc.

One of the highlights of my year was a session on student life, a panel discussion of undergraduates, graduate students, and recent alumni who

shared their perspective on the value of supporting campus. The recurring theme was that campus life is just as important as academic life. Paraphrasing one panelist, "A happy, healthy student will do great work in the lab and in the world."

Your support of MIT Hillel makes a difference to the nearly 10% of the student body that count among our community. This year saw particular stresses with student tragedies, and underscored the importance of talented and responsive professional staff such as the Hillel team, as well as the idea of a Sabbath – however one takes a break – being important for renewal and good health over time. Alongside all of the innovation is this ancient idea that transformed the world in a different way. MIT Hillel is a place where both types of creative thinking, the technological and the philosophical, meet.

As our year draws to a close, I ask you to [please make your gift by June 30](#), so that we may renew our goals for next year at the same level of excellence that were delivered this year. Once again, two of our graduating seniors wrote a heartfelt and compelling letter to ask for your support. Their words outweigh mine by far, and I know that when it arrives in your mailbox you will enjoy reading about what Hillel has meant to them during their four years here.

It is an honor to join with you in maintaining and building a strong Jewish presence at MIT.

Thank you,
Marla Choslovsky SM'88,
MIT Hillel Director of Development
marla360@mit.edu

[Add your name](#) to MIT Hillel's 2015 Donor Roll!

Tamid Initiative - Planned Giving @ MIT Hillel

Endowment and planned gifts truly sustain and build an organization. MIT Hillel is excited to help you create your personal Jewish legacy at MIT.

We invite alumni and friends who care deeply about Jewish life at MIT to consider joining the Institute's **Katharine Dexter McCormick (1904) Society (KDMS)** and be part of the **Tamid Initiative** by making a bequest to MIT, for the benefit of MIT Hillel. Your generosity will help MIT Hillel engage today's students, securing our Jewish future with confidence.

To inform us that you plan such a gift, download and send us a [pledge form](#).

MIT and MIT Hillel are eager to help you meet your objectives. For more information, please contact MIT Hillel Director of Development, Marla Choslovsky, marla360@mit.edu.

On the Calendar

Reunions/Commencement Events, Friday June 5

- **1:00-3:30pm** – Reception in honor of our newest graduates, Hillel Center, [Religious Activities Center, W11](#)
- **6pm** - Shabbat Friday night services, Hillel Center, [Religious Activities Center, W11](#)
- **7pm** - Shabbat dinner, [Religious Activities Center, W11](#); please [let us know you are attending](#), hillelsvp@mit.edu



Strategic Planning Process Open Space Program, Tuesday night ,June 23-Wednesday, June

24 - invitations forthcoming, or [email us](#) if you are able to attend

MIT Hillel mourns the recent loss of:

Norman Leventhal '38, founding President of the MIT Hillel Foundation, Inc. on April 5. A memorial service was held at MIT on April 22, including [these remarks](#) by President Rafael Reif.

May Norman's memory be for a blessing, and their families and friends find comfort among all those who mourn.

If you have life-cycle events to share with the MIT Hillel community, please [let us know](#).

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