Participant Biographies

Asael Abelman, Advanced Institute Participant
Israel

Asael Abelman is the head of the history department at Herzog College and a member of faculty in the Shalem College, both in Israel. In the last few years he has also been a teacher at Ein Prat—the Academy for Leadership. Dr. Abelman holds a Ph.D. in modern Jewish history and has published in numerous academic and popular Israeli journals and newspapers.

Matthew Ackerman, Advanced Institute Participant
United States

Matthew Ackerman has worked for a variety of Jewish organizations, including the Anti-Defamation League and the Jewish Community Relations Council. Most recently he served as recruitment director for Taglit-Birthright Israel. Before his work in Jewish communal service he was a Peace Corps volunteer in Ecuador, and he worked as a public high school teacher in Brooklyn as a New York City Teaching Fellow. His writing has appeared in Commentary, Tablet, and other publications. He is a graduate of Johns Hopkins University and the Jewish Theological Seminary.

Nerya Cohen, Advanced Institute Participant
Israel

Nerya Cohen is a teacher at Tichon Hadash High School in Tel Aviv, where he coordinates the Judaic studies program and is a member of the board. He is an alumnus of the Revivim honors program at the Hebrew University, where he concentrated in Biblical and Judaic studies. After finishing his B.A., he completed his LL.B. at the Bar-Ilan Law School, where he served as the editor of the Bar-Ilan Law Journal for three years. Last year he had the unique opportunity to work as a law clerk in the chambers of Justice Neal Hendel of the Israeli Supreme Court. In addition to his work as a teacher, Mr. Cohen works in the Be’eri program at the Shalom Hartman Institute as a coordinator and as a writer of textbooks and teachers’ guides.

Daniel Fainstein, Advanced Institute Participant
Mexico

Dr. Daniel Fainstein has been Dean of the Hebraica University in Mexico City since 2003. He was educated at the universities of Buenos Aires, the Latin American Rabbinic Seminary, the Hebrew University, and the National Autonomous University of Mexico, where he completed his Ph.D. summa cum laude. His academic interests are the intellectual and social history of the Jews, the sociology of religion, and education. Dr. Fainstein has published in many academic and popular
journals and magazines on Jewish topics, education, and the sociology of religion. He is the author of *Judaism, Human Rights and Spirituality: An Intellectual Biography of Rabbi Marshall Meyer* (2013). He has been a lecturer and consultant at numerous Jewish institutions in Latin America.

**Henry Gross**, Advanced Institute Participant  
*United States*

Henry Gross is an attorney who lives in New York City. He serves as president and CEO of the The Realex Capital Corporation, a privately held investment company that specializes in the acquisition and development of commercial real estate, health care facilities, and under-achieving operating companies. Mr. Gross has a strong interest in religion and theology and has written two books concerning the Jewish festivals. He recently completed a third book, titled, *The Paths of Providence; Does God Control Everything?*, which will be published this summer. God willing, of course.

**Chaya Sima Koenigsberg**, Tikvah Summer Fellow  
*United States*

Chaya Sima Koenigsberg is a doctoral student studying Jewish philosophy and mysticism at the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies of Yeshiva University, where she received her M.A. in Jewish Philosophy. Previously, she studied at Yeshiva University’s Stern College for Women, as well as Michlalah Jerusalem College for Women in Israel. She has taught at Manhattan High School for Girls in New York City and currently teaches Jewish history and Jewish philosophy at Shevach High School for Girls in Queens, New York, where she also serves as the grade level advisor for the ninth grade. She lives in Washington Heights, New York with her husband Akiva and their three children.

**Tuvya Miller**, Tikvah Summer Fellow  
*United States*

Tuvya Miller is a rising senior at Yeshiva University majoring in English and Jewish studies. He hails from Baltimore, Maryland and spent two years studying in Israel at Yeshivat Har Etzion. In the fall he will begin course work toward an M.A. in Jewish studies at the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies. Mr. Miller works as a peer advisor for first year students at YU and looks forward to serving on SOY-JSC, an undergraduate student council, during the coming academic year. He enjoys reading classical Jewish texts and contemporary ethnographies while keeping a close eye on national and Israeli politics. He looks forward to having intensive and rewarding conversations this summer with an interesting and diverse group of people.
Alon Naveh, Tikvah Summer Fellow
Israel

Alon Naveh comes from a progressive Judaism background. He was active in Noam Youth Movement of the Conservative Judaism Movement in Israel and studied at the Leo Baeck Education Center in Haifa. After graduation from high school Alon studied at the Upper Galilee Institute for Leadership in Kibbutz Maayan-Baruch; he was then recruited to the IDF Intelligence Corps, in which he served for nearly six years, three of them as an officer. This year Alon was among the first students of the new Shalem College in Jerusalem.

Yishai Rivlin, Tikvah Summer Fellow
Israel

Yishai Rivlin is a fourth year student of law at the Hebrew University, where he is concurrently pursuing an M.B.A., majoring in finance. He is a graduate of the Public Policy Program of the Jewish Statesmanship Center and is an intern at the National Economic Council of the Prime Minister’s Office. Next year Mr. Rivlin will begin a legal internship at the Israeli Supreme Court. In his spare time he is a taekwondo instructor and international referee.

Hananel Ross, Tikvah Summer Fellow
Israel

Hananel Ross is currently finishing his B.Ed. in Talmud and Jewish thought at Herzog College. Over the past two years he has participated in the Tikvah Fund’s Literature and Philosophy Program at the college. He works as an editor for several periodicals. He completed his army service as a paratrooper in the Hesder program in Yeshivat Birkat Moshe. There he subsequently began his rabbinical semicha studies, which he is now continuing at Yeshivat Machanaim. Next year he will study psychology at the Hebrew University. He is married to Smadar and lives in Jerusalem.

Efrat Sagy, Tikvah Summer Fellow
Israel

Efrat Sagy graduated from Haifa University with a B.A. in philosophy and Middle Eastern studies, as part as the Chavatzalot program, an IDF program aimed at creating leadership ideals in the intelligence corps. She currently serves as an intelligence officer in the IDF. Before enlisting in the army, she pursued Judaic studies in Midreshet Lindenbaum.

Emmanuel Sanders, Tikvah Summer Fellow
United States

Emmanuel Sanders will begin studies pursuing a J.D. at the New York University School of Law this fall. He holds a Master’s degree in Jewish philosophy from the Bernard Revel Graduate School and has participated in both undergraduate and graduate fellowships at the Center for Jewish Law and
Contemporary Civilization at the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law. Before starting his undergraduate studies, Mr. Sanders spent two years in Israel studying Talmud at Yeshivat Kerem B’Yavneh; he recently received rabbinic ordination from Yeshiva University. He is deeply interested in the relationship between ethics and law and would like to pursue a career in special education law and advocacy. He lives on the Upper West Side of New York with his wife Anna and daughter Rutie.

**Yoni Schimmel**, Tikvah Summer Fellow  
*England*

After graduating from Hasmonean High School in London, Yoni Schimmel studied at Yeshivot of Har Etzion, Yeshiva University, and Mir, in Jerusalem, for four years. He is currently in his final year of a history B.A. program at University College London.

**Carry Schlaff**, Tikvah Summer Fellow  
*Austria*

Carry Schlaff grew up in Vienna, Austria. She completed her undergraduate degree in mathematics and education in Jerusalem and is currently finishing her Master’s degree in biomedical engineering at the Vienna University of Technology. She was part of the team that organized the European Maccabi Games in Vienna and is now in charge of the social media presence of her community’s youth commission. She is a member of Young Wizo Austria, a division of the Women’s International Zionist Organization, and a volunteer for Chai Lifeline, which provides services and programs for seriously ill children and their families.

**Benjamin Silver**, Tikvah Summer Fellow  
*United States*

Benjamin Silver just graduated from the University of Chicago with an A.B. in philosophy and political science. His academic interests include political philosophy and moral education, especially in ancient Greek thought. He is a former Hertog Fellow and was once an intern at the *Weekly Standard*. His writing, which includes work on contemporary issues facing American Jews and American politics, has appeared in *Counterpoint*, *Makom*, the *Weekly Standard*, and *Mosaic* magazine.

**Daniel Tabak**, Advanced Institute Participant  
*United States*

Daniel Tabak is a Ph.D. candidate in medieval Jewish history at the Bernard Revel Graduate School for Jewish Studies. He is currently a doctoral scholar at the Tikvah Center for Law and Jewish Civilization at the New York University School of Law and was previously a fellow at the Center for Jewish Law and Contemporary Civilization at the Cardozo School of Law. He completed his Master’s degree in medieval Jewish history at Revel and received rabbinic ordination from the Rabbi
Isaac Elhanan Theological Seminary. He graduated from Yeshiva University with a B.A. in economics.

Ortal Tamam, Tikvah Summer Fellow

Ortal Tamam is originally from Netanya. She studies medicine in the M.D.-Ph.D. program at Ben-Gurion University in partnership with the Cincinnati's Children's Hospital. Before serving as a combat paramedic (EMT-P) in the IDF, she acted as a young emissary of the Jewish Agency in Cincinnati, Ohio. Today she works as a volunteer with Holocaust survivors. She founded a focus group called Young Jewish Leadership (YJL), which operates in Netanya and Cincinnati. It studies Judaism, leadership, and Israel and works to have a positive influence on each participant’s local community. In 1986 Ortal’s uncle was kidnapped and murdered by Arab-Israeli terrorists during his army service. His convicted killers were scheduled for release in the recent round of terrorist releases by the Israeli government as a “goodwill gesture” toward the Palestinian Authority. Ms. Tamam was very active in protesting the release, which was eventually cancelled.

Lawrence Vogel, Advanced Institute Participant

Lawrence Vogel received his Ph.D. in philosophy from Yale and is a professor of philosophy at Connecticut College, where has taught since 1989. Professor Vogel is the author of *The Fragile 'We': Ethical Implications of Heidegger's Being and Time* (Northwestern University Press, 1994) and the editor of a volume of Hans Jonas’s later essays, *Mortality and Morality: a Search for the Good after Auschwitz* (Northwestern, 1996). His more recent publications reflect his special interest in Heidegger's Jewish students, especially Jonas, Hannah Arendt, Emmanuel Levinas, and Leo Strauss, and their responses to the legacy of their teacher.

Noam Weissman, Advanced Institute Participant

Noam Weissman has worked at Shalhevet High School since 2009. He was initially a Legacy Heritage Fellow at Shalhevet before becoming director of Judaic studies curriculum and Judaic studies principal. He is now principal of the school. Before joining the Shalhevet staff, he studied at Yeshiva University, where he graduated summa cum laude. He subsequently earned his Master of Science degree from Yeshiva University’s Azrieli School of Jewish Education. Having co-authored a unique approach to Judaic curricula, he is the recipient of two grant awards in this field. This fall he will begin doctoral studies at the University of Southern California. He is married to an amazing woman from the Upper East Side, Raizie Erreich, and has a son named Eyal.
Lily Wilf, Tikvah Summer Fellow
United States

Lily Wilf is a rising junior, majoring in history, at Barnard College, where she also spends a lot of time studying French. Hailing from New Haven, Connecticut, she attended Maimonides High School in Boston, then traveled to Israel for a year of Jewish study at Migdal Oz before Barnard. On campus she is an active member of the Columbia/Barnard Hillel and an editor and writer for the Columbia Current, a journal of contemporary politics, culture, and Jewish affairs. This past semester, she worked at Tablet magazine. After her participation in the fellowship, she will remain in Manhattan this summer for a job with Macmillan Publishers.