

It is a pleasure to see the Brandeis Judaic Studies Journal publish another volume of scholarship by students.

Knowing the founding editors—Jonathan, Eliana and Benji—well from their student days when they first pitched the idea of this journal, it is easy to see how their interests in intellectual rigor converged with their personal engagement with Jewish texts and ideas. They produced a strong collection of undergraduate essays. As is often the case at Brandeis, where Jewish student leadership thrives, their vision of a journal by students has continued to inspire and educate new generations.

At Brandeis, academic Jewish Studies and the work of organizations like Hillel combine to strengthen students' personal Jewish commitments. Students can carefully study texts in the classroom with critical tools and in the *beit midrash* in the original Hebrew or Aramaic. I cannot think of other instances of a university, a department of Jewish Studies, and a Hillel all being founded at virtually the same time. Brandeis is home to established and new world-class scholars who are committed to scholarship as well as contemporary Jewish life, and has produced leaders who are better for having learned in Waltham how to think and how to study the Jewish experience across millennia.

Students can choose to pursue all sorts of extracurricular pursuits outside of their coursework. It should inspire all of us that there are students who spend their leisure time doing work that looks very much like what professors and students do in courses: writing, editing and then publishing their ideas in Jewish Studies.

Seth Winberg
Executive Director, Hillel
Senior Chaplain, Brandeis