

Dear Reader,

In his seminal work, *The Lonely Man of Faith*, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik distinguishes between the two Adams of Genesis' two creation narratives. Adam I, says Soloveitchik, is creative. He seeks power and masters this world, transforms it, and builds upon it. Adam II, however, withdraws from creation and approaches the world and his existence with metaphysical questions: how did I and everything around me come to be and why? Soloveitchik writes, "He encounters the universe in all its colorfulness, splendor, and grandeur, and studies it with the naivete, awe and admiration of the child who seeks the unusual and wonderful in every ordinary thing and event."<sup>1</sup>

While the essence of man includes both of these important instincts, this Journal is a prime example of the work of Adam the Second. In the following six articles, Brandeis undergraduates explore seemingly ordinary phenomena in Judaic studies—ranging from state interactions and modern media portrayal of Jews to biblical translation, Hasidic movements in America, and much more in between—with seriousness, depth, and a constant search for meaning. I am privileged to have overseen the publication of these pieces, in large part because they highlight the enduring struggle to understand the ultimate purpose behind the mundane.

Before I conclude, a brief note about the occasion upon which we publish our fourth issue. To mark Brandeis' 75th anniversary, our initial intention was to publish articles exclusively on the theme of Jews and American Universities. While we had to set that goal aside for now, I know that these articles demonstrate the true greatness of Brandeis upon this important milestone: an intellectual student-body dedicated to the flourishing of Jewish ideas. Without further ado, I present the fourth edition of the Brandeis Judaic Studies Journal.

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *The Lonely Man of Faith* (New York: Three Leaves Press Doubleday, 2006), 21-22.