

Speaker Biographies | Summer 2017

Speakers listed in order of speaking date



Adam R. Bronfman - As President of The Samuel Bronfman Foundation, Adam R. Bronfman is committed to furthering Edgar M. Bronfman's vision of inspiring a vibrant and joyful Jewish future by working to build a knowledgeable, proud, and welcoming community. As a member of Hillel's International Board of Governors, Adam has visited numerous Hillels in North America. He has been a catalyst behind the growth of Hillels internationally. He has served as an active board member at the Hillel of UC Santa Barbara and is a founder and advisory board member of Hillel for Utah. Adam established the Saidye Rosner Bronfman Rabbinic Chair at Temple Har Shalom in Park City, Utah, and has been a driving force behind the growth of the community. As an alumnus and former trustee of the Taft School, Adam endowed several scholarships at the institution. He has also served in a leadership capacity at both the National Ability Center and People's Health Clinic. Adam is the Co-Owner and Co-Founder of Rickdulous Racing along with his son, Josh Bronfman. He is the Executive Producer of the documentary Forward 13: Waking Up the American Dream. Adam and his wife, Cindy, have four children and live in Park City, Utah.



culture and finance.

Idit ben Or - Idit is a Bronfman alumna from 2001. After finishing high school, she went on a gap service year with Bronfman, and was later involved with establishing the alumni committee. During her undergraduate studies, Idit worked within various educational frameworks, mostly with the Israeli and International Movement for Progressive and Reform Judaism. Pursuing her love for the written word, Idit completed her degree and became the production coordinator for Jerusalem's international book fair. Idit is currently a PhD student of history at Hebrew University. Her field of research is the history of money, and she spends much of her time contemplating issues which hover between

Rabbi David Menachem - Rabbi Menachem is a liturgical Piyyutim singer, musician and composer. Menachem was raised in the old neighborhoods of Jerusalem under the tutelage of singers of the Piyyutim and specialists of the kabbalah. His cousin, the cantor Moshe Habusha, taught him the secrets of the Arab Maqam musical system and Arabic musical instruments. Since childhood, along with pursuing his Torah studies, he has performed with Iraqi musicians, members of the Voice of Israel in Arabic Radio Orchestra. David Menachem is presently active in promoting the world of Piyyut and Middle Eastern music in Israel. He has recorded dozens of ancient hymns that he learned from his grandfather, Gurje Yair, and he specializes in teaching poetry and Jewish Studies to Israeli singers at the Yedidi Hashachachta (My friend, did you forget) program at Next to the House of Hillel. In addition, Rabbi David Menachem has performed in festivals in Israel and abroad, among them: The Piyyut Festival, The Israel Festival, The Oud Festival, and the Fes Sacred Music Festival.



Matti Friedman - Matti Friedman is an Israeli Canadian journalist and author. He grew up in Toronto and moved to Israel in 1995, where he settled in Jerusalem. Matti's reporting has taken him from Israel to Lebanon, Morocco, Moscow, and the Caucasus, and his writing has appeared in the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and elsewhere. He is a former Associated Press correspondent and a regular contributor to *Tablet Magazine*. Two essays he wrote about media coverage of Israel after the 2014 Gaza war, for *Tablet* and *The Atlantic*, triggered intense discussion and have been shared together on Facebook more than 100,000 times. His first book, *The Aleppo Codex*, won the 2014 Sami Rohr Prize, the American Library Association's Sophie Brody Medal, the Canadian Jewish Book Award, and other honors. *Pumpkinflowers* was published in the U.S. on May 3, 2016, by Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill.



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Dr. Melila Hellner-Eshed - Melila is a research fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute. She is a professor of Jewish mysticism and Zohar in the department of Jewish Studies at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. She received her degree from Hebrew University under the tutelage of Professor Yehuda Liebes. For the past two decades, Melila has been a central figure in the Israeli renaissance of study of Jewish texts by Israeli adults of all paths of life in various frameworks. She initiated and directs the Rabbinic Students Seminar, a program for rabbinic students from all denominations spending a year in Israel. She is also the co-director of the Institute's Beit Midrash program. She has been teaching and working with Jewish communities in North America, Europe and the former Soviet Union for many years. Her book: "And a River Flows from Eden" - On the Language of Mystical Experience in the Zohar," was published by Stanford University Press in 2009. Melila is on the faculty of the Institute of Jewish Spirituality and is active in the 'Sulha' - a reconciliation project that brings together Israelis and Palestinians.



Rabbi Mishael Zion - Mish is the director of the Mandel Program for Leadership in Jewish Culture. He was the co-director, as well as a community educator and rabbi, at The Bronfman Fellowship. Together with his father, Noam Zion, he is the author of Halaila Hazeh: An Israeli Haggadah and A Night to Remember: The Haggadah of Contemporary Voices. Mishael holds a bachelor's degree in sociology and Jewish thought from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and rabbinic ordination from Yeshivat Chovevei Torah Rabbinical School in New York. He has served as a faculty member at the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem and the Skirball Center for Adult Jewish Learning in New York, and has been a visiting scholar at the New York University School of Law.



Yosef Abramowitz - Yossi, an American-Israeli human rights activist, educator and entrepreneur is recognized as one of the pioneers of the solar energy industry in both Israel and East Africa. Named by CNN as one of the six top global "Green Pioneers," by PV Tech as "one of the most inspiring solar CEOs" worldwide, and as Person of the Year by the Israel National Business and Energy Conference, Abramowitz is co-founder of the Arava Power Company, Israel's leading solar developer. Nominated three times for the Nobel Peace Prize, Abramowitz heads Energiya Global Capital, an impact investment platform that provides healthy returns to investors while advancing the environmental and humanitarian goals of providing affordable green power to underserved populations as a fundamental human right.



Rabbah Tamar Elad-Appelbaum - Rabbi Elad-Appelbaum is the founder of ZION: An Eretz Israeli Congregation in Jerusalem; and Vice President of the Masorti Rabbinical Assembly. Her work spans and links tradition and innovation, working toward Jewish spiritual and ethical renaissance. She devotes much of her energy to the renewal of community life in Israel and the struggle for human rights. She served as rabbi of Congregation Magen Avraham in the Negev; as a congregational rabbi in the New York suburbs alongside Rabbi Gordon Tucker; and as Assistant Dean of the Schechter Rabbinical Seminary in Jerusalem. In 2010 she was named by the Forward as one of the five most influential female religious leaders in Israel for her work promoting pluralism and Jewish religious freedom.



Rabbi Yehoshua Pfeffer - Rabbi Pfeffer is head of the Haredi Israel division at the Tikvah Fund, running a variety of programs and projects that cater to members of the Haredi and Religious-Zionist communities. Pfeffer was born and educated in London before continuing his Torah education in Israel. He served as a Dayan (Rabbinical Judge) on a Jerusalem monetary court, as chief rabbi and moderator of an international Jewish-law website, and as chief editor of the Ner LeElef Resources program. He has written numerous books and articles on different subjects of Jewish law and thought; lectures extensively for various forums in Israel and abroad; and has taught at several Yeshivot in Israel, currently at Hedvat HaTorah. He has also served as chief halachic assistant to the former Chief Rabbi of Israel and as a researcher for the Israel Law Ministry. He holds a Bachelor's and Master's degree (summa cum laude) in law from Hebrew University, and clerked at the Supreme Court of Israel, also teaching at Hebrew University and the Herzlia Interdisciplinary Center. He attended the Tikvah Summer Fellowship program in 2012.



Jonah Fisher - Jonah is the Founder/Owner of FLO - a community co-working space in South Tel Aviv. Originally from New York City, Jonah is an alumnus of ROI, the Dorot Fellowships in Israel, the Tikvah/Ein Prat Institute of Zionist Thought, the Bronfman Youth Fellowships, and the C.V. Starr Social Entrepreneurship Fellowship. Jonah was the founding Director of Development for a local microfinance organization, the Capital Good Fund, he founded the Interfaith Exchange, an interfaith service-learning program for Christian, Jewish, and Muslim teenagers across Rhode Island, and served as the founding Program Manager of Core18, an international Jewish social entrepreneurship fellowship. Most recently, Jonah served as the Director of Training/Leadership and a socio-economic analyst at the Reut Institute. Jonah is a graduate of Mechinat Beit Yisrael, an Israeli leadership academy, and Brown University where he studied religion, education, and social entrepreneurship.



Assael Romanelli - Assael Romanelli, MSW, is a licensed couple & family therapist, international trainer and Playback Theater conductor, who resides in Jerusalem with his dynamic wife and two lively kids. He is the founder and director of The Potential State Institute which helps enrich relationships through therapy, arts & trainings. He is also the artistic director of the Or Chozer Playback Theater company in Jerusalem.



Yossi Klein-Halevi* - Yossi is the author of *Like Dreamers: The Story of the Israeli Paratroopers Who Reunited Jerusalem and Divided a Nation*, published by HarperCollins in 2013, which won the Jewish Book Council's Everett Family Foundation Jewish Book of the Year Award. Yossi writes for the op-ed pages of leading American newspapers. He is also author of the 2001 book, *At the Entrance to the Garden of Eden: A Jew's Search for God with Christians and Muslims in the Holy Land*. Yossi's first book, *Memoirs of a Jewish Extremist*, told the story of his teenage attraction to, and subsequent disillusionment with Jewish militancy. The New York Times called it "a book of burning importance." Yossi has been active in Middle East reconciliation work, and serves as chairman of Open House, an Arab Israeli-Jewish Israeli center in the town of Ramle, near Tel Aviv. Yossi was one of the founders of the now-defunct Israeli-Palestinian Media Forum, which brought together Israeli and Palestinian journalists. He was a senior fellow at the Shalem Center in Jerusalem from 2003-2009. Yossi was born in New York. He has a B.A. in Jewish studies from Brooklyn College and an M.S. in journalism from Northwestern University. He moved to Israel in 1982, and lives in Jerusalem with his wife, Sarah, a landscape designer. They have three children.



Yaelle Kayam - Yaelle is an Israeli filmmaker and journalist. She is known for her most recent film, "Mountain," which made its debut in 2015. It was featured at the Toronto International Film Festival. Her other notable works include "Providence" and "Diploma." "Diploma" was regarded at festivals across the world, including the Cannes Film Festival and the Munich International Student Film Festival. Diploma was later bought by the television production company, Canal+. Her films also have a heavy influence of geography and location. Yaelle Kayam is known for posing strong political questions in her films, and they mostly revolve around the religion of Judaism.



Guy Sharett is the founder of StreetWise Hebrew – an innovative method of Hebrew language instruction combining the sights, sounds, smells and tastes of Tel Aviv. Guy grew up in the Israeli coastal town of Ashdod. His father was kibbutznik tugboat skipper at the the Ashdod Port, and his Mom was a painter and ceramist. His fascination with languages came from the many sailors his father brought home: "I'd come home on a given evening to find a Croatian ship engineer, a Filipino sailor and a German captain chatting with Dad about bow propellers." Guy later graduated from the department of Hebrew Language at The Hebrew University in Jerusalem, where he also studied Arabic, Aramaic, Latin, Italian and Dutch. He lived in Indonesia, London and Bangkok before returning to Tel Aviv.



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Shirel Horovitz - Using video, sound, sculpting and texts, Tel Aviv based artist Shirel Horovitz, creates performances and installations exploring cities and communities. Along side her art practice, Horovitz lectures and leads workshops, city tours and art tours for private groups as well as with a variety of organizations and institutions including Bezalel Academy of Art and Design, Alma College for Hebrew Culture, Dorot Foundation, JCCA, HUC and more. Horovitz earned her BFA from Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Jerusalem and her MA from The Interdisciplinary Art program in Tel Aviv University. She exhibited in major galleries and art festivals in Israel and internationally and is currently working on a new body of works in her studio in south Tel Aviv.



Yossi Leshem - Yossi Leshem is a Senior Researcher in the Department of Zoology in the Faculty of Life Sciences at Tel Aviv University and is the founder and Director of the International Center for the Study of Bird Migration at Latrun, Israel, established by Tel Aviv University and the SPNI. He also worked at the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel (SPNI), the leading NGO in Israel for 25 years, as a guide, as Director of a Field Study Center, as Head of the Nature Protection Department, Initiator and Director of the Israel Raptor Information Center between 1980-1991, and as the Executive Director of the SPNI between 1991-1995. In November 2007 he was elected as the Chairman of the SPNI Council. Since 1984, his research for his doctorate, which was conducted with the cooperation of the Israeli Air Force and the Ministry of Science, has resulted in a decrease of 76% in the number of collisions with aircraft caused by birds, and has saved 790 million dollars, not to mention the numbers of lives, both human and avian. Today he serves as Lt. Col. (Ret) in the Israeli Air Force and continues this research. Leshem is involved in a variety of activities in bird migration research, in educational activities that take place in over 250 schools in Israel, also in cooperation with the Palestinians and the Jordanians, and has developed an educational and scientific site on the Internet called "Migrating Birds Know No Boundaries". Leshem initiated a program to use Barn Owls and Kestrels as biological pest control agents to reduce the use of pesticides in agricultural fields, which became a national program and a regional project with Jordan and the Palestinian Authority. Leshem has published three books, scientific papers, and hundreds of articles in popular magazines. Leshem visited Japan as a visiting professor at the University of Tokyo from June 30th – October 12th, 2006. Leshem is a recipient of the "Lifetime Achievement Award for Environmental Protection" awarded in 2008, presented during the sixty years celebration.



Dr. Yehuda Kurtzer - Yehuda is the President of the Shalom Hartman Institute of North America and a leading thinker and author on the meaning of Israel to American Jews, the value of the Jewish past to the Jewish present, and questions of leadership and change in American Jewish life. Yehuda leads the efforts of the Institute across the North American Jewish communal landscape, and teaches widely in the Institute's many platforms for rabbis, lay leaders, Jewish professionals, and leaders of other faith communities. Yehuda received his doctorate in Jewish Studies from Harvard University and an MA in Religion from Brown University, and is an alumnus of both the Bronfman Youth and Wexner Graduate Fellowships. Previously Yehuda served as a member of the faculty and as the inaugural Chair of Jewish Communal Innovation at Brandeis University. He is the author of *Shuva: The Future of the Jewish Past*, which offers new thinking to contemporary Jews on navigating the tensions between history and memory, and on how we can relate meaningfully to our past without returning to it. He lives in New York with his wife Stephanie Ives and their three children.



Dr. Rachel Korazim - Rachel is a freelance Jewish education consultant specializing in curriculum development for Israel and Holocaust education. Until 2008 she had been the Academic Director of Distance Learning programs at the JAFO Department of Education. Born in Israel, she had served in the I.D.F. as an officer in the central training base for women and was later, a member of the I.D.F. delegation to Niger (West Africa). She is a graduate of Haifa University with a Ph.D. in Jewish education. Rachel had a vast experience in Jewish education both in Israel and the Diaspora. As one of the founders and directors of a special program for soldiers from a disadvantaged background, she was responsible for creating the educational framework and training teachers for the implementation of the program. Since her first Shlichut to Canada where she was the head of JAFI delegation from (1985-1988) she is involved with Jewish education worldwide; creating and implementing in-service training programs for educators, writing educational materials, counseling and teaching. Rachel is familiar, through many visits, with the Jewish education communities of the US, Canada, Latin

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America and Europe. Since 1990 she has invested a lot of her time and energy in helping the emerging Jewish schools of Hungary.



Noa Yammer - Noa is the Communications Coordinator for Hand in Hand Schools, a growing network of integrated schools and communities that bring thousands of Jews and Arabs together every day. She is also the Youth Program Director of Heartbeat, a program that unites Israeli and Palestinian youth musicians to build critical understanding, develop creative nonviolent tools for social change, and amplify their voices to influence the world around them. After growing up in a religious home in New Jersey, Noa came to Israel at the age of 18, and moved to Israel after two years of Jewish learning. Her family joined her three years later. Upon completing her BA in

Psychology in 2008, Noa spent 5 months as a volunteer in a rural village in Nepal, teaching and running theater and empowerment programs in schools in two Himalayan villages. She spent two years after that working with religious girls with eating disorders, using music and writing in her therapeutic counseling. She currently lives in Jerusalem and is finishing her MA in Gender studies and activism at Bar Ilan University. Noa is also a singer-songwriter, performing with her ukulele and guitar in local Jerusalem venues.

Dr. Moshe Koppel – Moshe is the founder and serves as chairman of the Kohelet Policy Forum and is a member of the department of Computer Science at Bar-Ilan University. He received his Ph.D. in mathematics from Courant Institute and did post-doctoral work in the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton. Dr. Koppel's main areas of research in computer science include machine learning and social choice theory. His work on authorship attribution is used widely in commercial, legal and security applications. Dr. Koppel has also published two books and many articles on Rabbinic literature, with special emphasis on logic and probability. He also co-founded and co-edited the journal *Higayon*, which is devoted to these topics. Dr. Koppel's political activity includes co-drafting two proposed constitutions for Israel, including a joint proposal with Michael Eitan, formerly chairman of the Knesset's Constitution and Law committee. Several laws that Dr. Koppel drafted have been passed by the Knesset.



Anat Hoffman is the executive director of the Israel Religious Action Center, the legal and advocacy arm of the Reform Movement in Israel. Previously, she held a seat on the Jerusalem City Council, where for fourteen years she stood in opposition to the policies of the city's right-wing and ultra-Orthodox administration. She has dedicated her adult life to the Jewish principle of *tikkun olam*, which literally means repairing the world. In 2013, the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* named her "Person of the Year", noting the award reflected "the prominence that she has achieved across the Jewish world over the past 12 months". The *Jerusalem Post* listed her fifth, among its list of 50 Most Influential Jews, for forcefully and successfully bringing the issue of women's rights at the Kotel to the "forefront of the consciousness of world Jewry."



Dr. Marcie Lenk - Dr. Lenk is a Shalom Hartman Institute research fellow and the Institute's Director of Christian leadership programs. She teaches patristics at the Studium Theologicum Salesianum at Ratisbonne Monastery, and Jewish and Christian texts at Ecce Homo Convent, the Swedish Theological Institute, and the Tantur Ecumenical Institute. She received her Ph.D. at Harvard University with a dissertation entitled, *The Apostolic Constitutions: Judaism and Anti-Judaism in the Construction of Christianity*, and earned an M.T.S. from Harvard Divinity School, as well as an M.A. in Bible and B.A. in Mathematics and Jewish Studies from Yeshiva University. Dr. Lenk has taught Early Christianity, Hebrew Bible, and Rabbinic Literature at institutions such as Boston University and City College of New York, as well as at Jewish and Christian seminaries in Israel and the United States.



Rabbi Simcha Mirvis – Rabbi Mirvis lives in Tsfat and works at the Koren Steinseltz Shefa Foundation. Simcha studied at Boston University, Bar Ilan University and Yeshivat Har Etzion (Gush). He served as the Rabbi of Sadeh Ilan for ten years. He is the founder of the Tsfat Legacy Center.





Eytan Rund - Eytan grew up in Jerusalem. After the army service (paratroopers) acquired a degree in educating, and later became a tour guide, focusing on educational tourism. In Addition to guiding many educational programs, Eytan guides over a dozen gap-year-programs on a regular basis. He specializes in Jewish history, geopolitics and guiding Israeli war sites.



Rabbi Avital Hochstein - Rabbi Hochstein is President of Hadar in Israel. Avital is the former rosh kollel at the Pardes Institute. A research fellow at Mechon Shalom Hartman, she has taught Talmud for several years at both institutions and was rosh beit midrash at the new Hartman High School for Girls. Avital is a graduate of Hebrew University with a BA in Talmud, and is pursuing her doctorate at Bar Ilan University. She is the co-author of *The Place of Women in Midrash* (Yedioth Ahronoth 2008). Avital is also a founder of Kehilat Shirah Hadashah in Jerusalem.



Dr. Avivah Zornberg – Dr. Zornberg is a Torah scholar and lecturer. Zornberg received her BA and PhD in English literature at Cambridge University and has spent the last two decades teaching Jewish Studies in Jerusalem and lecturing worldwide. She has published her interpretations of narrative in Biblical exegesis in books on Genesis and Exodus, as well as a new collection of essays, “The Murming Deep: Reflections on the Biblical Unconscious.”