

TEACHER BIOS

OUR DIRECTORS:

**TALYA GORSETMAN, *Director of the Lisa F. Brill Institute of Jewish Learning***

Talya Gorsetman was born and raised in Manhattan and studied at Jewish day school before attending Midreshet Lindenbaum, a post-high school program in Israel teaching women Bible, Talmud, and Jewish law. She studied at Stern College for Women, earned her bachelor's degree in Jewish studies from Yeshiva University, and attended Hunter College's theater master's program. Talya married Rabbi Adam Starr and went to Israel to complete the post-college Women's Bruria Scholars program at Midreshet Lindenbaum. After moving to Atlanta, she served as Drama Director at Camps Ramah and Moshava, and Yeshiva Atlanta High School, and was the Performing Arts Director at the Atlanta Jewish Academy. Currently Talya is the Director of the Lisa F. Brill Institute for Jewish Learning at the MJCCA. She embraces the Melton methodology and outlook and feels passionate about every class she teaches. She and Rabbi Adam Starr are delighted to raise their children in the Atlanta Jewish community.

**JUDY STOLOVITZ, *Program Associate for the Lisa F. Brill Institute of Jewish Learning***

Judy Stolovitz is the Program Associate for the Lisa F. Brill Institute for Jewish Learning at the MJCCA. She served on the Greenfield Hebrew Academy (GHA) and AJA Boards for over a decade, and in 2014 as Board President of GHA, she was involved in the creation of AJA. She received her M.A. in Islamic Studies and Diploma in Education from McGill University, and a B.A. in Near Eastern and Judaic Studies from Brandeis University. Judy feels passionate about the Melton way of learning and has been teaching six different Melton curriculums over the past few years. Judy is married with three wonderful children.

**DR. SHELLEY BUXBAUM**

A Wilmington, Delaware native, Dr. Shelley Buxbaum is a three-time graduate of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America; holding bachelor's, master's, and Ph.D. degrees. She also earned a bachelor's degree from Columbia University and was a visiting scholar at the Hebrew University. Before coming to Atlanta, Shelley created the Department of Jewish Life and Learning at the JCC in Stamford, CT. She served on the faculty of the Park Avenue Synagogue in New York City, as Program Director at Temple Sholom in Greenwich, CT, and as Adult Education Director at the Commission for Jewish Education of the Palm Beaches. Shelley served as the director of the Lisa F. Brill Institute for Jewish Learning for eight years. Exploring a Forgotten World: A Social History of Medieval Jewry as Revealed in the Cairo Genizah.

**RABBI BRIAN GLUSMAN**

Rabbi Glusman serves as the MJCCA Director of Outreach and Community Engagement. He is currently the visiting Rabbi at Congregation Shearith Israel in Columbus, Georgia and served from 2000 to 2009 at Temple Beth-El in Birmingham, one of Alabama's largest synagogues. Rabbi Glusman received his rabbinic degree from the Academy for Jewish Religion in New York, and has a master's degree in counseling with an advanced degree in marriage and family therapy. He served as a visiting lecturer at the University of Alabama and was a frequent speaker at Samford University. Growing up in Atlanta, Rabbi Glusman attended the Hebrew Academy of Atlanta and Yeshiva High School, now known as AJA. Rabbi Glusman and his wife, Dr. Laurie Glusman, have three children and live in Sandy Springs.



DR. ERIC GOLDSTEIN

Dr. Eric Goldstein is the Judith London Evans Director of the Tam Institute for Jewish Studies and Associate Professor of the Department of History at Emory University. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan in 2000. His areas of expertise include modern Jewish history, American Jewish history and culture, and American social and cultural history. He is the author of *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity*, for which he received the American Jewish Historical Society's Saul Viener Prize and the Jewish Book Council's Sami Rohr Prize for Jewish Literature Choice Award. He also wrote *To Life: The Jews of Atlanta* and served as editor of the American Jewish Historical Quarterly scholarly journal from 2008-2012.



ANA HAZANOV

Ana Hazanov is a Jewish educator from Israel who resides in Atlanta and works in the Jewish community. She holds a degree in special education and she has more than 20 years of experience teaching Jewish children, teens and adults. Ana began her career in Israel teaching Ulpan to Ethiopian immigrants, she continued her career in Atlanta teaching preschool at MJCC and afterwards teaching preschool and Hebrew classes at the Temple. She is passionate about education in general and Jewish education in particular. She believes that a strong connection to the Hebrew language and Israel is important to develop a strong Jewish identity. In her free time Ana enjoys traveling with her family, reading, public speaking and Latin dance.



DEVORAH LOWENSTEIN

Devorah Lowenstein has been a full-time educator for more than 15 years. She has worked in both the Jewish and special education communities in a variety of formal and informal settings. Devorah is the Director of Atlanta Education Associates. She holds bachelor's degrees from Barnard College and the Jewish Theological Seminary, a master's degree from Lehman College and is an Associate in the Academy of Orton Gillingham Practitioners and Educators. Devorah lives in Connecticut with her husband and two daughters.



DR. EDWARD QUEEN

Dr. Edward Queen is Director of the D. Abbott Turner Program in Ethics and Servant Leadership and Director of Pedagogy for the Emory Integrity Project. He received his B.A. from Birmingham-Southern College, his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, and his J.D. from the Indiana University School of Law- Indianapolis. Other professional positions include: serving as founding director of both the Religion and Philanthropy Project at the Indiana University Center on Philanthropy and of the Islamic Society of North America's Fellowship Program in Nonprofit Management and Governance. Queen has written, coauthored, and edited numerous books and received the Laura Jones Hardman Award for Excellence in Service to the Emory Community.



RABBI MELVIN SIRNER

Rabbi Melvin Sirner is a native of Chicago, Illinois and spent many meaningful summers at Camp Ramah in Wisconsin. Rabbi Sirner graduated from the University of Michigan with a double major in political science and psychology. He pursued rabbinical studies at the Jewish Theological Seminary, where he received a Master's of Hebrew Letters and Rabbinical Ordination. Rabbi Sirner served as Sr. Rabbi at Beth El Synagogue in New Rochelle, NY for 39 years before retiring in 2015. Much of his focus was on increasing educational opportunities for congregants of various backgrounds and levels of Jewish observance. Rabbi Sirner was active in programs that brought Jews together across denominations and was proud to have served as President of the Westchester Board of Rabbis and as a board member of Meals on Wheels. Upon retirement, Rabbi Sirner served as Interim Rabbi at Congregation Shearith Israel in Atlanta. He is excited to be teaching and looks forward to an exciting, albeit different year.



RABBI ADAM STARR

Rabbi Adam Starr has been the Rabbi and spiritual leader of the Young Israel of Toco Hills synagogue since 2008. Rabbi Starr grew up in Silver Spring, MD and studied at Yeshivat Shalavim in Israel for two years prior to receiving his bachelor's degree from Yeshiva College, and has rabbinical ordination from the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Rabbinical Seminary at Yeshiva University. Before coming to Atlanta, Rabbi Starr served as the Associate Rabbi at the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale for eight years. Rabbi Starr serves on the Executive Committee of the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA) and is the past president of the Atlanta Rabbinical Association. He also serves on the Atlanta Regional Beth Din for Conversion of the RCA. Rabbi Starr is a longstanding Melton instructor in New York and Atlanta.



ANITA STEIN

Anita Stein taught art at the Atlanta Jewish Academy for 15 years and ran the art program at Camp Stone for a number of summers. She enjoys connecting her love of art to Jewish texts and concepts. Anita graduated from the University of Georgia with a degree in art education and studied post grad at The Portfolio Center in Atlanta for a degree in design and art direction. Anita worked as an art director at ad agencies in New York and Atlanta. She is currently working with pastels and shows her work at the Raiford Gallery Circa and on Etsy.



RABBI REUVEN TRAVIS

Rabbi Reuven Travis has worked for 20 years as a Jewish day school teacher for students ranging from second grade to high school. He earned his bachelor's degree from Dartmouth College, where he graduated Phi Beta Kappa, with a double major in French literature and political science. He holds a master's degree in teaching from Mercer University and earned a master's in Judaic studies from Spertus College. He received his rabbinic ordination from Rabbi Michael J. Broyde, dean of the Atlanta Torah MiTzion Kollel. Rabbi Travis currently serves as the Executive Director of the College Beit Midrash of Atlanta. He has previously published scholarly works on the book of Job, the book of Numbers, and the book of Genesis, respectively. He is currently working on a series of children's parasha books, and the first, *A Curious Student's Guide to the Book of Genesis: Enduring Life Lessons for the Twenty-First Century*, is now available from Amazon and other booksellers.



DR. ELI SPERLING

Dr. Eli Sperling serves as the Asian and Middle Eastern Studies Postdoctoral Associate at Duke University's Center for Jewish Studies. After receiving his B.A. in Middle East studies and political economy from Evergreen State College in Olympia, WA, Eli Sperling pursued an M.A. in contemporary Middle Eastern history at Tel Aviv University. He has traveled and researched extensively throughout the Middle East, spending significant time in Israel, Cairo and the Sinai Peninsula, and received his Ph.D. from Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. Eli served as the Senior Academic Research Coordinator at Emory University's Institute for the Study of Modern Israel, where he also taught as a guest lecturer at the Tam Institute for Jewish Studies. His research focuses on the proliferation and use of Hebrew music from Palestine in the American Jewish community between 1920-1948. He investigates how this music played a role in a greater process through which varying streams of transnational Zionism became enmeshed in American Jewish institutional, congregational, educational and communal life.