

HEBREW COLLEGE

TODAY

VOLUME 22, NUMBER 1 · WINTER 2008/5768 המכללה העברית היום

**HC Partners with
Northeastern**

**Close Encounters with
"The Other"**

**Ellen Bernstein on Jewish
Ecological Wisdom**

Who Are Today's Bubers and Rosenzweigs?

**In Search of Jewish
Philosophical Greatness**

New Chapters

Fifteen years ago, when I assumed the helm of Hebrew College, I was charged with defining a new vision for this venerable institution. But even as I welcomed that exciting challenge, I do not think I ever could have imagined the exceptional place that Hebrew College has become. Every day, I walk into our beautiful campus and see and hear our students—debating texts in the Rabbinical School Bet Midrash, chanting liturgy in our Cantor-Educator Program, working with special needs children who are studying for bar or bat mitzvah, chatting in Hebrew at a lunchtime *hug ivri*, discussing the fine points of curriculum design for Jewish educators. And every day, I am grateful to have had the privilege of working with

spiritual leaders—the Rabbinical School and the Cantor-Educator Program.

Nonetheless, I believe that the most significant chapters about Hebrew College’s influence in the Jewish world have yet to be written. As the White Queen said to Alice in Lewis Carroll’s *Through the Looking-Glass*, “It’s a poor sort of memory that works only backwards.”

As we move ahead, I look forward to seeing the College continue on its bold path, defining educational and leadership needs in the Jewish world and developing the academic programs to meet those needs. Already, we are beginning to see the fruits of our efforts. As you’ll read in this issue, our first four Cantor-Educators are already beginning to make their marks in

I look forward to seeing the College continue on its bold path.

such a gifted team to build an institution that has become a major presence in Jewish life—changing the face of Jewish education here in New England, across the U.S. and worldwide.

This June, I will be stepping down from the presidency with a great sense of accomplishment. Over these past 15 years, together we have built on the strong, proud legacy of Hebrew College, expanding the Prozdor into the most successful supplementary high school for Jewish teens in the nation, and evolving the Shoolman Graduate School’s professional programs for Jewish educators to include an unequalled array of specializations, from early childhood to Jewish special education. We have

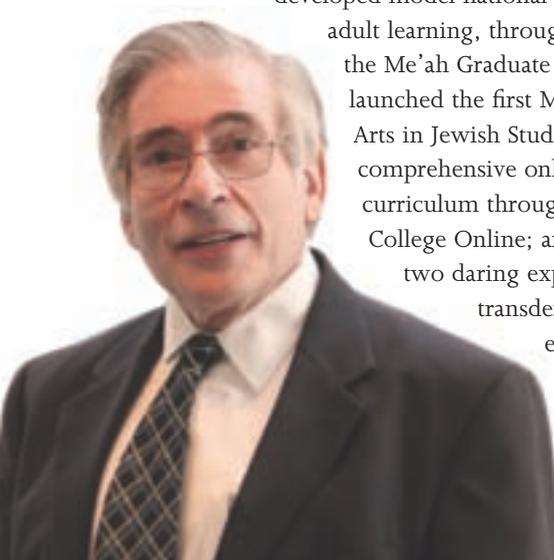
developed model national programs in adult learning, through Me’ah and the Me’ah Graduate Institute; launched the first Master of Arts in Jewish Studies and a comprehensive online Hebrew curriculum through Hebrew College Online; and created two daring experiments in transdenominational education for

their new congregations. This winter, we will be launching an online Master of Jewish Education with a specialization in Early Childhood Education. We are poised to become a national center for training professionals in Jewish special education. And 11 graduates of our Rabbinical School will become ordained this June and move on to serve pulpits and other rabbinic posts throughout the country.

It is an exciting time, indeed. As I prepare to move on, I am deeply grateful for the friendships and collegiality that have enabled us to create this new Hebrew College together. I have been fortunate to have worked with and shaped a most remarkable professional team of faculty and staff, and blessed with a distinguished and committed group of lay leaders. I look forward to the opportunity to pursue my own scholarship in this next chapter of my professional career, while taking pleasure in the continuing, extraordinary journey of Hebrew College.



Dr. David M. Gordis



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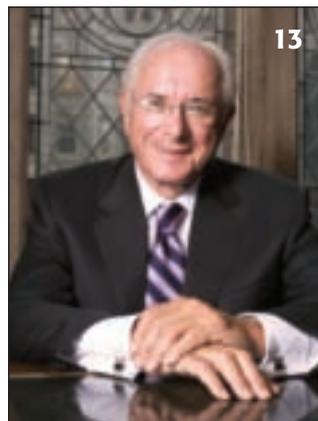
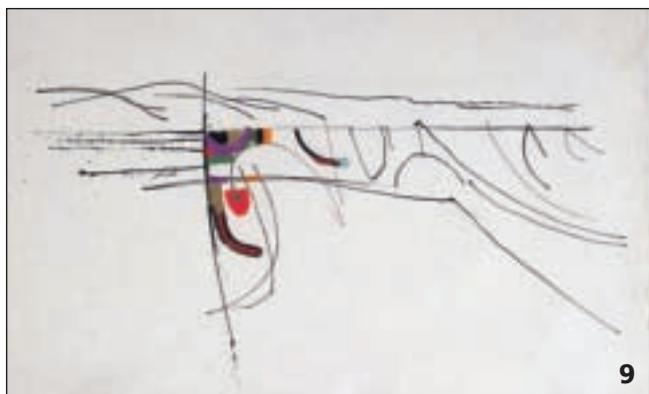
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On the Cover "The Future of Statues" by René Magritte, Belgian surrealist, known for his philosophical gestures, 1898–1967. ©Tate, London 2007.

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Northeast Congregations Welcome First CEP Grads

In the few months since she became the first full-time cantor of Congregation B'nai Israel in Basking Ridge, New Jersey, Shana Onigman MJE'd'06, CEP'07 has launched a new Shabbat music program for preschoolers, revamped High Holiday services with fresh melodies and insights, and begun tackling her biggest challenge yet—to build a deep bench of confident Torah readers at the 270-family Conservative synagogue. “I love empowering congregants to really take ownership of the Torah,” she says. “Seeing students’ faces light up when they realize they’ve just chanted a verse of Torah using their own knowledge of trope and Hebrew is always exciting.”

Onigman is one of the first four graduates of Hebrew College’s Cantor-Educator Program (CEP), a five-year, transdenominational graduate program that prepares students to become both liturgical leaders and full-fledged Jewish educators—a combination sought by a growing number of congregations. Not long after their June 3 sendoff at Hebrew College’s 82nd Commencement, all four CEP grads found jobs that reflect the program’s two-pronged focus.

At B'nai Israel, Onigman works as a pastor and teacher in addition to service and life-cycle officiator. Sarra Spierer MJE'd'07, CEP'07 serves the independent, 350-family Congregation Beth Elohim in Acton, Mass., as its first Cantor/Pastoral Associate. Spierer leads services, prepares b'nai mitzvah students, facilitates life-cycle events and teaches youth and adult classes. “The variety of courses offered by CEP matches the variety of responsibilities I have in this position,” Spierer observes. “These courses gave me a good foundation in nusah (chant) and helped me to put together thoughtful and innovative lesson plans.”

Leslie Hamilton MJE'd'07, CEP'07 works as Assistant Cantor at the 1,000-



The Rabbinical School of Hebrew College’s first graduating class will be ordained on June 1, 2008. Members of the fifth year class are now interviewing for professional positions. For more information: hebrewcollege.edu/rabbio8.

L to R: Michael Cohen, Shayna Rhodes, Judi Ehrlich, Elaine Pollack, Jim Morgan, Hannah Gershon, Chaim Koritzinsky, Sonia Saltzman, Randy Kafka, Stephen Landau, Alison Adler.

family Temple Emanu-El (Conservative) in Providence, R.I., where she focuses on teaching, Torah reading, b'nai mitzvah preparation and officiating at selected services and life-cycle events. Equipped with a Certificate in Jewish Special Education from Hebrew College, she has coached special needs b'nai mitzvah students to chant Torah. Michael McCloskey MJE'd'07, CEP'07 serves the 400-family Temple Emeth (Conservative) in Chestnut Hill, Mass., as Cantor-Educator. His roles include youth director, religious school educator and service leader.

“For a brand new program with no track record to have placed its first class in such meaningful and multifaceted positions is a testament to the program’s vision as well as to the quality of the students,” says Cantor Scott Sokol, CEP Director and Dean of the Jewish Music Institute. “Our four graduates consider themselves educators and Jewish professional leaders every bit as much as shlihei tsibbur (service leaders). It’s that perspective that has made them so attractive as candidates and so adept at their new jobs.”

B'nai Israel Rabbi John S. Schechter agrees. “Cantor Onigman’s training in both traditional and

contemporary nusah adds depth to our services,” he says effusively. “Similarly, she has applied her formal education training to the reshaping of our adult education and b'nai mitzvah classes, pinpointing which components make successful lessons and memorable prayer experiences.” —MD

\$100,000 Carpenter Grant Boosts Rabbinical School Fellowship Pool

For one outstanding HC rabbinical student next fall, tuition will no longer be a concern. All five years of study will be covered, thanks to a \$100,000 grant in July 2007 by the Philadelphia-based E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation.

The new Carpenter Fellowship, to be awarded on the basis of merit and need, is a major milestone in efforts to increase the Rabbinical School’s fellowship pool.

“Our students are pioneers. They come to us because they share our vision for change in North American Jewish life,” says Rabbi Sharon Cohen Anisfeld, Dean of the Rabbinical School. “We encourage

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Complements Attract

HEBREW COLLEGE FORGES PATH-BREAKING PARTNERSHIP WITH NORTHEASTERN

One campus sits on seven acres of forested hillside in Newton Center; the other, on 66-plus densely built acres in downtown Boston. One specializes in graduate Jewish studies and Jewish education; the other, in leadership training, languages and education via a wide range of undergraduate and graduate programs.

Those complementary strengths are key to a new collaboration between Hebrew College and Northeastern University, announced in July—one of the most expansive partnerships between a Jewish college and a private university.

Plans call for joint undergraduate and graduate degrees and programs, including a joint BA/Master of Arts in Jewish Studies and a joint BA/Master of Jewish Education, to commence in fall 2008.

The two institutions are also discussing optimal ways to share resources and expertise in Hebrew language instruction and how best to collaborate on distance learning.

“In this era of increased worldwide opportunities, no institution can truly thrive on its own,” says Dr. Joseph E. Aoun, President of Northeastern University. “This partnership broadens our cross-cultural education and expands our global initiatives.

“Sharing our existing resources and creating joint endeavors will provide the students at both institutions with unparalleled access to leading scholars and world-class education on Jewish history and culture.”

Since the July announcement, Hebrew College academic administrators have been meeting with their counterparts at Northeastern’s College of Arts and Sciences and College of Continuing and Professional Studies to map out details of the new collaboration.

Among the key elements under discussion:

- Joint faculty appointments in Jewish studies. Faculty from both institutions will work together on curriculum planning, academic colloquia and new appointments.

- A joint undergraduate program leading to a bachelor’s degree from each institution, as well as a joint bachelor’s-master’s degree program that will allow students to earn the two degrees concurrently. The first joint programs, expected to launch in the fall, will be a BA from Northeastern University paired with either a Master of Arts in Jewish Studies (MAJS) or Master of Jewish Education (MJEd) from Hebrew College. Future plans call for a combined program leading to a Master of Arts in Teaching from Northeastern and an MJEd or MAJS from Hebrew College.

“Sharing our existing resources and creating joint endeavors will provide the students at both institutions with unparalleled access to leading scholars and world-class education on Jewish history and culture,” says NU President Aoun.



Joseph E. Aoun

- Shared access to Northeastern University’s Snell Library and Law Library, with more than 1.3 million volumes, and Hebrew College’s Rae and Joseph Gann Library’s 125,000 volumes. The College’s collection includes Jewish art, Jewish education curricula, archival documents, rare books and manuscripts, as well as extensive online databases in Judaica, humanities, social sciences and education.
- Cross registration for each other’s matriculated students. Students will be able to register for courses

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them to develop new visions of the rabbinate, to reach out to underserved populations; yet the prospect of major debt can force graduates into only the safest, most conventional positions.”

Hebrew College provides a variety of fellowships for rabbinical students. Fundraising efforts in honor of Cohen Anisfeld’s appointment as Dean last year have reaped two new \$10,000 fellowships for rabbinic leadership for the 2008–2009 academic year. In addition, HC offers the \$10,000 Rose and Morris Sokolove Rabbinical Fellowship to an outstanding rabbinical student committed to strengthening Jewish life.

“This fellowship will position an outstanding student to think more creatively about his or her rabbinate,” says Sharon Cohen Anisfeld.

Rabbinical students may also apply for several merit awards that are available to all degree candidates through the Hebrew College Fellows Program. Grants range from \$5,000 to \$10,000 annually. The Rabbinical School strives to ensure that no qualified student is prevented from enrolling for financial reasons. Several means of financial aid are available, including tuition discounts, scholarships and fellowships.

The Carpenter Fellowship sets a new standard for rabbinical student awards. “We are especially grateful to the Carpenter Foundation for this fellowship, which will provide full financial support and position an outstanding student to think more creatively about his or her rabbinate,” says Cohen Anisfeld.

The Carpenter Foundation, which primarily supports graduate theological education as well as public charities and hospice care, first supported the College by funding the Rabbinical School’s Spiritual Direction Program, directed by Rabbi Carol Glass, in 2004. They continue to support the program with a generous annual gift.

“The Carpenter Foundation sees the need for high quality spiritual leaders in the world—no matter the denomination—and they take that need really seriously,” says Ellen Bernstein, HC Grants Consultant. “They understand what Hebrew College is trying to do.”

For more information about rabbinical school fellowships, contact Rabbi Sharon Cohen Anisfeld at sanisfeld@hebrewcollege.edu or 617-559-8634.

—EH and ER

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in music, Jewish studies, Hebrew language, as well as in other departments appropriate for their programs of study.

- Shared access to each institution’s extensive online distance learning programs and technology resources.

“Jewish studies and Jewish education thrive in contact with cutting edge research in the humanities and social sciences,” says Dr. Harvey Shapiro, Associate Professor of Jewish Education and HC’s lead liaison with Northeastern. “This collaboration presents an opportunity to have higher Jewish education integrated with higher general education. We can tap into experts in subjects such as the philosophy of religion, ethical issues in education, multiculturalism—it’s a tremendous opportunity for us to make connections and expand our range of offerings.”

Dr. Christopher E. Hopey, Vice President and Dean of Northeastern’s School of Professional and Continuing Studies, agrees. “Northeastern University is delighted to partner with Hebrew College on a series of innovative programs for the Jewish community and beyond,” he says. “The expertise and world-renowned reputation of Hebrew College combined with Northeastern University’s academic excellence in

Plans call for joint undergraduate and graduate degrees and programs, including a joint BA/Master of Arts in Jewish Studies and a joint BA/Master of Jewish Education, to commence in fall 2008.



leadership, languages and education will provide world-class academic opportunities for residential college students and working professionals in areas such as Hebrew language, Jewish education and nonprofit leadership.”

“We are proud to collaborate with Northeastern University,” says President David M. Gordis. “We look forward to sharing our extensive wealth of knowledge with each other and to creating joint initiatives that provide students interested in Jewish studies with the academic experience they will need to become leaders on both the local and global scales.” **HCT**

Ambitious Agenda

MARION GRIBETZ CREATES A PROFESSIONAL CULTURE FOR JEWISH EDUCATORS

Last winter, Hebrew College hosted an unprecedented meeting to elicit ways to enhance careers of Jewish educators who work directly with children in congregation and community-based Hebrew schools. For many of the educators in attendance, the meeting marked one of the rare occasions in which the Jewish community actually recognized religious school teachers, youth directors and other non-administrative staff members as career professionals.

“The research shows that for many of the people teaching in these programs on a part-time basis, this is their main job. Many have been at it for more than a decade and have never been trained,” says Marion Gribetz, the Shoolman Graduate School of Jewish Education’s Associate Dean. “These are the educational gatekeepers for most Jewish children. But there’s nothing that gives them a body of knowledge they should know and be engaged with on an ongoing basis.”

To rectify the situation, Gribetz is working to create professional development offerings for educators who work in Jewish educational institutions other than day schools. It’s one of several initiatives she’s been avidly pursuing for the past year—to develop a professional culture for Jewish educators within and beyond the walls of Hebrew College. Working closely with Dr. Harvey Shapiro, Associate Professor of Jewish Education, Gribetz is spearheading efforts to better serve the professional needs of the Shoolman School’s growing student body, and to deliver leading edge professional development programs to Jewish educators of all levels in Greater Boston, nationally and around the world.

“Marion comes with a very high level of knowledge about Judaism and the field of Jewish education, deep involvement with many Jewish education initiatives across the country and high accolades from many in the field,” Shapiro says. “She’s someone who genuinely wants to improve the state and culture of Jewish education.”

Gribetz—who previously served as Director of the Center for Institutional and Professional Development at the Bureau of Jewish Education of Greater Boston and has worked as an Adjunct Instructor in Jewish Education at Hebrew College since 1994—is downright bullish on

Hebrew College’s prospects for professionalizing the field. Displaying the boundless exuberance of a CEO about to rock the market with a revolutionary startup, she glows when talking about the tasks ahead. Fueling her optimism is not only an ebullient personality, but also a rigorous educational philosophy. Applying a Jewish educational



Gribetz is working to create professional development offerings for educators who work in Jewish educational institutions other than day schools.

framework advanced by the Mandel Foundation, a Cleveland and Jerusalem-based organization that supports educational leadership in the nonprofit world, Gribetz aims to help Jewish educators of all levels to address four arenas systematically: course content, teaching capabilities, learners’ needs and the Jewish communal context in which the teaching and learning takes place.

Propelled by this philosophy, Gribetz seeks to introduce Hebrew College’s degree and certificate programs and course offerings to a wider population of professional Jewish educators in Greater Boston, Western Massachusetts, Florida and abroad. “We’ve done a very good job locally in Boston, and many educators here have come to our certificate programs. But there is a tremendous need in the

continued on next page

Sandy Miller-Jacobs Takes the Lead on Jewish Special Ed

The need is clear, and demand is growing. Jewish parents of children with special needs want Jewish educators to help their children learn. In response, more and more Jewish schools have made special education a higher priority.

But not high enough—at least, not yet, according to Dr. Sandy Miller-Jacobs, HC’s newly

appointed Director of Jewish Special Education Programs and Professor of Special Education.

Many Jewish communities across the U.S. are providing in-service training for classroom teachers, says

Miller-Jacobs, as the first step in raising awareness of issues surrounding special needs students. To fully address the issue, however, she says that

communities need more Jewish special educators who will serve as resources for planning curricula and developing accommodations. In addition, she says, “teachers need to know how to work with kids with special needs in their own classrooms.”

She should know. Miller-Jacobs spent the past six years initiating and expanding special needs services in Jewish preschools, day and congregational schools throughout Greater Boston in her role as Director of Special Education Services at the Bureau of Jewish Education of Greater Boston (BJE). Her work, funded by Combined Jewish Philanthropies (CJP), made her acutely aware of the shortage of professionally trained Jewish special educators.

Miller-Jacobs sees her new role at Hebrew College as a way to help meet that need. Drawing on her years at the BJE and previous decades of experience training special educators and creating professional development programs at Fitchburg State College, she envisions Hebrew College as



Sandy Miller-Jacobs

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Jewish world, as a whole, for these kinds of programs,” she says. Harvey Shapiro agrees. “The Boston Jewish community has well over 2,000 paid part-time and full-time professionals,” he observes. “Several hundred have done course work at Hebrew College, but many more need to be engaged, in Greater Boston and beyond.”

To make that happen, Gribetz is now exploring the possibility of creating course modules that will enable people throughout the world to get Hebrew College certificates and degrees online. These modules would exploit existing Hebrew College Online capabilities, videoconferencing technologies and short-term, regionally-based intensives that have proven successful in the Early Childhood Institute’s distance learning initiatives in Western Massachusetts and Boston’s North Shore.

In addition, Gribetz is marketing Me’ah Graduate Institute (MGI) courses to educators in Greater Boston who have not participated in Me’ah or other Hebrew College certificate or degree programs. “We’re creating a long-term relationship with professionals in the greater Jewish community,” she says. “The idea is to explore what we here can offer to help them along their professional journey.” Since the spring 2007 semester, Hebrew College has begun offering several MGI Hebrew language and text study courses to practicing Jewish educators.

Gribetz is developing a network of select “laboratory schools” in Greater Boston with on-site mentors dedicated to providing both pre-professional and seasoned student interns with meaningful, targeted fieldwork experiences.

Within the Shoolman School, one of Gribetz’s first priorities is to create a more comprehensive internship program for students in the College’s Jewish education master’s degree and certificate programs. She’s now developing a network of select “laboratory schools” in Greater Boston with on-site mentors dedicated to providing both pre-professional and seasoned student interns with meaningful, targeted fieldwork experiences. “The pre-service students need to be pulled into an environment that values the study of Jewish education and helps to help induct them into the profession,” says Gribetz. “As for experienced teachers, perhaps no one has ever asked: Why do you do ‘x’ and not ‘y’? What’s your philosophy of education, and how does it play out when you’re preparing a *shabbaton*? These questions can help veteran educators reflect on their practice and sharpen their focus. It’s a win-win situation—for the Hebrew College student, for the veteran teacher and, ultimately, for the children in the program.”

One of the first lab schools that Gribetz has identified is Keshet, a Cambridge and Newton-based program that combines Jewish learning and after-school activities for children in grades K–9. In her view, Keshet stands out because its administration

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Color Demands a Response

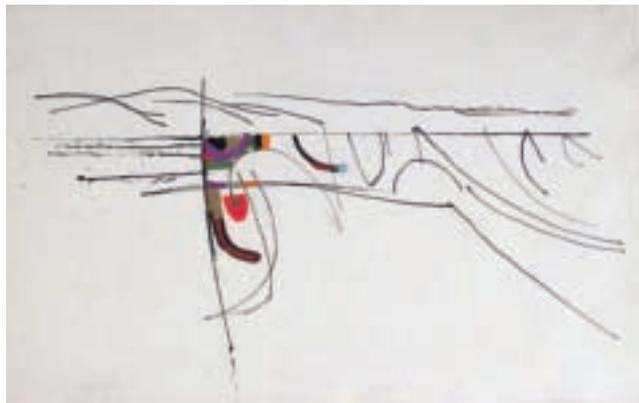
THE ART OF NATHANIEL J. JACOBSON

Nathaniel Jacobson's portraits and lithographs have adorned the walls of Hebrew College buildings for many years—part of an extraordinary body of work that spanned six decades until his death in 1996. In recognition of his compelling artistic vision and contribution to Jewish cultural life, Hebrew College presented the exhibit *Color Demands a Response*, a retrospective of Jacobson's work.

Running from May through December 2007, the exhibit featured pieces from collections owned by Hebrew College and members of Jacobson's family. Much of the work on display reflected a lifetime of fusing artistic expression, color theory and Jewish themes, while bearing witness to powerful historical events. In addition to his paintings and lithographs, Jacobson designed sculptures, murals, mosaics, stained glass and synagogue interiors. Schooled in color theory and responding viscerally to the brilliant light of the Middle East, Jacobson experimented with color and evolved into an authority on the subject, revolutionizing how color is perceived.

Jacobson's aesthetic was spiritual; he saw art in religion and religion in art. A practicing Modern Orthodox Jew and a lifelong Jewish text learner, he had a great affinity for the values of Hebrew College. When Hebrew College mounted "The Fabric of Jewish Life" in 1981, the exhibit included several of his synagogue tapestries, and Jacobson was invited to give a lecture at HC on his work. His family continued the association with Hebrew College: Both his sons, David Bar Yakov P'60, and Joshua Jacobson P'65, attended Prozdor and Camp Yavneh. Joshua Jacobson, Director of the Zamir Chorale, artists-in-residence at Hebrew College, is Visiting Professor of Jewish Music at HC and Professor of Music and Director of Choral Activities at Northeastern University.

Dashes of brilliant color, bold strokes of black line on a white surface form a radiant abstract scene of the Judean Hills, where color exists in the shadows of the dazzling light. This luminous piece of art comes from the palette of Nathaniel J. Jacobson (1916–1996), painter and designer, art instructor and color theorist. For Jacobson, his frequent visits to Israel, beginning in the 1950s, illuminated innovative ideas of color and light that were to stay with him throughout his career as an artist. "Color demands a response," wrote Jacobson.



Above (detail):
"Makhtesh
Ramon," c. 1969,
paint, oil pastel
and ink on paper.

Left: "Desert
Sketch," c. 1969,
handcolored
print on paper.

Jacobson's path into the world of art and color began early—when, at nine years of age, he watched an artist painting a mural in his father's synagogue. From that moment, Jacobson knew that art would be his life's work. Though he grew up in a religious environment where visual art wasn't considered a vocation, the youngest son of the renowned Orthodox rabbi, Joseph M. Jacobson, daydreamed about becoming a painter. He knew that he wanted to express his Judaism differently from his father. With little support from his parents, Jacobson kept his dream alive. By day, he continued his schooling and religious studies; on weekends, he walked the three miles from the family home on Intervale Street in Roxbury to pursue his passion at Boston's Museum of Fine Arts.

After high school and a brief stint at the Museum of Fine Arts School, Jacobson enrolled in the Massachusetts School of Art. Graduating in 1938, the young artist was

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a national center for training Jewish special educators and teachers of inclusive classrooms.

Since 2000, HC's Shoolman Graduate School of Jewish Education has offered a Certificate in Jewish Special Education as well as a special education concentration within the Master of Jewish Education degree program. The 18-credit certificate is structured around two intensive

“Hebrew College has the degree and certificate programs and the expertise to prepare Jewish special educators who are in such demand, here and throughout the country.”

two-week institutes, taken during consecutive summers, plus supervised fieldwork during the school year. The program includes coursework in special education in Jewish settings, assessment, curriculum design, behavior management in the inclusive classroom and language development, as well as preparing students with special needs for bar or bat mitzvah, program administration and special needs issues in preschools.

Funded by a generous gift from Philadelphia philanthropist Bernard J. Korman to support HC's Jewish special education programs (see story page 13), Miller-Jacobs hopes to expand offerings on teaching Hebrew as a second language to students with special needs. To that end, she is working with experts from the University of Haifa, Gateways (a Greater Boston collaborative that expands educational access for Jewish children with special needs), the BJE and Hebrew educators with organizations such as NETA, HC's secondary school Hebrew language program. She also plans to create a resource guidebook for Jewish special educators. And that's just for starters.

“We need more Jewish special educators and classroom teachers who know how to work with diverse learners,” she says. “There's a lot of community interest and energy in Greater Boston, through Gateways, the BJE and CJP, to meet that need. Hebrew College has the degree and certificate programs and the expertise to prepare Jewish special educators who are in such demand, here and throughout the country.”

For information about the summer 2008 Jewish Special Education Institute, please visit hebrewcollege.edu/spedo8.

—EH

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now grounded in the basics of life drawing, anatomy, etching and lithography. He had also studied color theory under Anna Hathaway, a disciple of Albert Munsell, pioneer in the exploration of color—an interest that manifested itself in all of Jacobson's work.

Dedicated to his study of art, Jacobson enrolled in Yale University's School of the Fine Arts, where he received a BFA in 1941. When his professor, Dr. Lewis York, suggested that he turn to what he “knew best” for thematic inspiration, Jacobson returned to his Jewish traditional background; theological and midrashic images began to shape his paintings. “I wanted to do something that would bring a comment on our times from the Jewish traditions,” he later explained, “something more personal.” These two elements, color and Jewish themes, continued to run through his lifework.



“The Bread of Affliction,” 1940, egg tempera on panel.

Meanwhile, Jewish history was playing itself out in Europe. Hitler's cruel conquests escalated and Jews were suffering. Jacobson's major work of this period, “The Bread of Affliction” (1940), which juxtaposes the Passover story with contemporary oppression of the Jews, took six months to complete. “It was a good challenge for me to create this expression of my sympathy for what was going on then, in the terrible beginning of the fire in Europe,” Jacobson later recalled. In 1941, “The Bread of Affliction” was selected by the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh for its exhibition *Directions in American Painting*. His painting won an honorable mention, making Jacobson the youngest artist ever to receive this recognition.

Also in 1941, Jacobson moved from New Haven back to Boston with his new wife, the daughter of his landlord at Yale. There he continued to paint, eking out a living with a few portrait commissions. His work was displayed at some significant exhibits, including the Gallery of Modern Art and the Macbeth Gallery, both in New York City, and The Arts Club of Chicago.

Jacobson enlisted in the army in 1943 and was initially assigned to paint portraits of officers. At his request, he was sent

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Arts in Action

PROZDOR MOSAICS BEAUTIFY DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

On a Sunday afternoon last winter, a Prozdor middle school class was bussed over to the Hebrew Rehabilitation Center in Boston. Their mission: to collaborate with senior residents on a mosaic art project. Two students paired with each resident, and everyone connected while sketching designs and choosing from bowls of colorful, broken tile pieces to form mosaic stepping stones for the Rehabilitation Center Garden.

Earlier that morning, a class of Prozdor high school students pursued another mosaics social action project. The class had obtained three benches from Seats of Consciousness, a program run out of the Fair Foods, Inc. social action organization in Dorchester, which decorates benches to beautify the community. Combining cement and tile with hard work and enthusiasm, the students decorated the benches in three different themes—black and white, underwater, and landscape/sunset.

Both projects emerged from “Mosaic Arts and Social Justice,” a class Prozdor instructor Tova Speter created for middle school and high school Prozdor students to infuse learning about the arts with social justice initiatives and relevant Jewish values.

“I try to provide kids with the opportunity to explore Jewish learning through direct engagement with the arts,” says Speter, “and to teach them that art is not only about ‘craft’ but also about creative experience—it’s something that can be shared and enjoyed within the greater community.” An artist and a graduate of Brandeis University, Speter majored in psychology and minored in Judaic studies and art. She also has a master’s in art therapy and works as Program Manager at The Art Connection, a nonprofit organization that expands public access to art through an art donation and placement program.

Bil Zarch, Director of the Prozdor High School, sees Speter’s class as unique within the Prozdor curriculum, yet well-matched to the school’s mission. “Prozdor offers lots of social action classes, but none have the goal of beautifying something,” says Zarch. “At the same time, lots of studio art classes are offered at Prozdor, but without the social justice piece.” He notes that “Mosaic Arts” fulfills Prozdor’s goals of familiarizing its students with the Jewish ethic of community service and strengthening their sense of Jewish identity.

In middle and high school classes alike, Speter immersed students early on in the role mosaic arts have played in Jewish tradition. With a focus on Israel, she highlighted the many ancient mosaics in synagogues and assigned both classes to write about the history of a famous Israeli mosaic and to recreate it, using modern-day materials.



Some of these mosaics represent symbols of the Jewish tradition, while others tell biblical stories. The middle school class collectively worked on their own wall-size mosaic, which told the story of Noah’s ark.

As Speter transitions from teaching the history of mosaics to directly engaging students in the mosaic creation process, she introduces ideas about community service and social justice. “What does *tzedeck* mean?” she asked her students in a recent session. While both classes determined that the term refers to helping those who are

“In the process of mosaic creation, lots of little pieces combine to create a larger art,” says Speter. “Likewise with community service, when we each do a little, we can all do a lot.”

less fortunate, they also agreed that within Judaism, it’s your role as a Jewish citizen to practice *tzedeck*. “In the process of mosaic creation, lots of little pieces combine to create a larger art,” says Speter. “Likewise with community service, when we each do a little, we can all do a lot.”

Speter’s high school class experienced this firsthand when they visited Fair Foods to pick up three benches for the Seats of Consciousness program. Before leaving, they toured the facility, which redistributes fresh food to those in need. Then they divided into teams, and in 30 minutes, assembled 150 12-pound bags of food that would be distributed to low-income families and senior citizens in Greater Boston for one dollar each.

Student Rachel Sirkin P’09 marveled at how much her class accomplished in so little time, and appreciated the impact of its collective effort. “I like how Fair Foods’ approach to community service is different,” she says. “They sell the food bags, valued at \$13 or \$14, for a dollar, so they don’t make the families feel completely incapable of providing for themselves.”

When they returned to Prozdor with their quarry—three benches made of excess wood from area glass and construction companies—the high school students again learned the power of working together. They divided into

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New MJEEd Offers Specialization in Early Childhood Education

Beginning this January, Jewish preschool teachers and directors may advance professionally by working toward a Master of Jewish Education from Hebrew College with an intensive specialization in early childhood education. Courses in the 47-credit degree program may be taken on-site, online or as a mix of both. The curriculum incorporates the 18-credit Certificate in Early Childhood Jewish Education, so that certificate students can move seamlessly into the master's program.

"We want to raise the bar in the field," says Ina Regosin, Founding Director of the Early Childhood Institute (ECI) and Dean of Students. "We know that the early years are pivotal in a child's developmental growth. To nurture the child's Jewish identity, as well as the parents', you need knowledgeable Jewish educators."

Since the ECI's founding 20 years ago, about 100 Jewish preschool educators have earned the certificate, among more than 250 students who have taken courses in early childhood Jewish education at HC. Many graduates teach in area nursery schools throughout Greater Boston, the North Shore and South Shore, playing a pivotal role in shaping the values of Jewish children.

Regosin says the program is designed for Jewish preschool administrators and teachers who want to advance their credentials, as well as for individuals who would like to change careers. The curriculum will include a mix of core courses that integrate Jewish studies, educational theory and practical application in the classroom; general courses in early childhood education; Jewish studies courses and Hebrew language. Students will complete a final research project and also have supervised field experience.

"We have a strong track record in training this cadre of educators," says Regosin, who has devoted the past four decades of her career to the field. "Not only have our graduates helped to develop the Jewish identity of children and families—they've also increased their personal commitment to Jewish life as a result of their studies. They're outstanding role models who emphasize the 'Jewish' in early childhood Jewish education."

For more information, please contact Ina Regosin at iregosin@hebrewcollege.edu.

—EH

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three groups to decorate their own benches to be donated to the local community. Having visited the class in action, Zarch commented, "They were really working as a team. You could tell that they took pride in what they were doing."

So, too, did Speter's middle school students when they created mosaics with seniors at the Hebrew Rehabilitation Center (HRC), a component of Hebrew SeniorLife. They bonded not only as a class, but also with Center residents. Lauren Persky, the Center's art therapist and co-organizer (with Speter) of the activity, found the two Prozdor students to one senior resident ratio perfect, because it encouraged making connections. "This activity was a really comfortable and natural way to introduce social justice and community service to the Prozdor kids," says Persky.

A favorite part of class for student Rebecca Shait P'10 was visiting the HRC and working with her senior partner, whom she describes as very "fun and energetic." She enjoys the fact that she and her classmates will leave their mark with the 20 mosaic stepping stones they made for the Center's garden, and she now plans to volunteer at the Center. Noah Masur P'10 also enjoyed visiting the Center, where he and a friend were paired with a Spanish-speaking resident. Although he only knew the Spanish words for colors, they were able to communicate and complete the project without a hitch.



"Tova really goes above and beyond the call of duty with mentoring these kids and teaching them the value of social justice in the community," says Zarch of Speter. The arts and social justice combination proved popular; both middle and high school classes were oversubscribed. Speter offered students another opportunity to experience this kind of learning in a spring semester course, "Social Justice and Environmental Art." This course explored social justice as it relates to today's environmental concerns, as well as the art of recycling and creating "recycled art"—an activity involving re-using materials to decorate the community and promote recycling.

Rachel Goldberg P'09, a student in the high school "Mosaic Arts" class, expressed interest in enrolling in such a class again. "I learned a lot about mosaics and how they connect to Judaism and Israel, and how all of those things connect to helping others," she says. "I figure that if people other than myself can benefit from my education at Prozdor, then that's a really cool bonus." **HCT**

Championing Jewish Special Education

BERNARD KORMAN'S GIFT PROPELS A PROFESSION

Two decades after his peers celebrated becoming b'nai mitzvah, a man was called to the Torah for an aliyah, chanted a blessing in Hebrew and declared his connection to God and community—marking a milestone his family had never thought possible. He had severe autism and, when he was a boy, his synagogue, like so many Jewish institutions, was neither equipped nor inclined to include him in education, ritual and rites of passage.

Today, the man's significant accomplishment is not unique. More congregations and Jewish educational settings are welcoming members and students with special needs. Indeed, since the late '90s, Jewish special education has emerged as a communal and educational priority, especially in Greater Boston and at Hebrew College. Despite these strides, however, thousands of children and adults with learning and developmental disabilities are still marginalized and excluded from Jewish education. There is a great need for a larger, stronger cadre of Jewish special educators—and those who train them.

Philanthropist Bernard J. Korman has donated \$1.5 million to endow a professorship in Jewish Special Education and has pledged \$150,000 a year for the next three years to staff and grow the pioneering program.

Now, thanks to a major gift to Hebrew College's Jewish Special Education program, more progress will be made toward that goal. Philanthropist Bernard J. Korman has donated \$1.5 million to endow a professorship in Jewish Special Education and has pledged \$150,000 a year for the next three years to staff and grow the pioneering program.

"The Korman Professorship in Special Education will propel forward our nationally recognized, comprehensive certificate in special education for Jewish settings," says Dr. Harvey Shapiro, Associate Professor of Jewish Education, who helped to create the certificate program. "Synagogues, day schools, Jewish community centers and Jewish camps will all benefit, as Bernard Korman's gift helps take us to a whole new level."

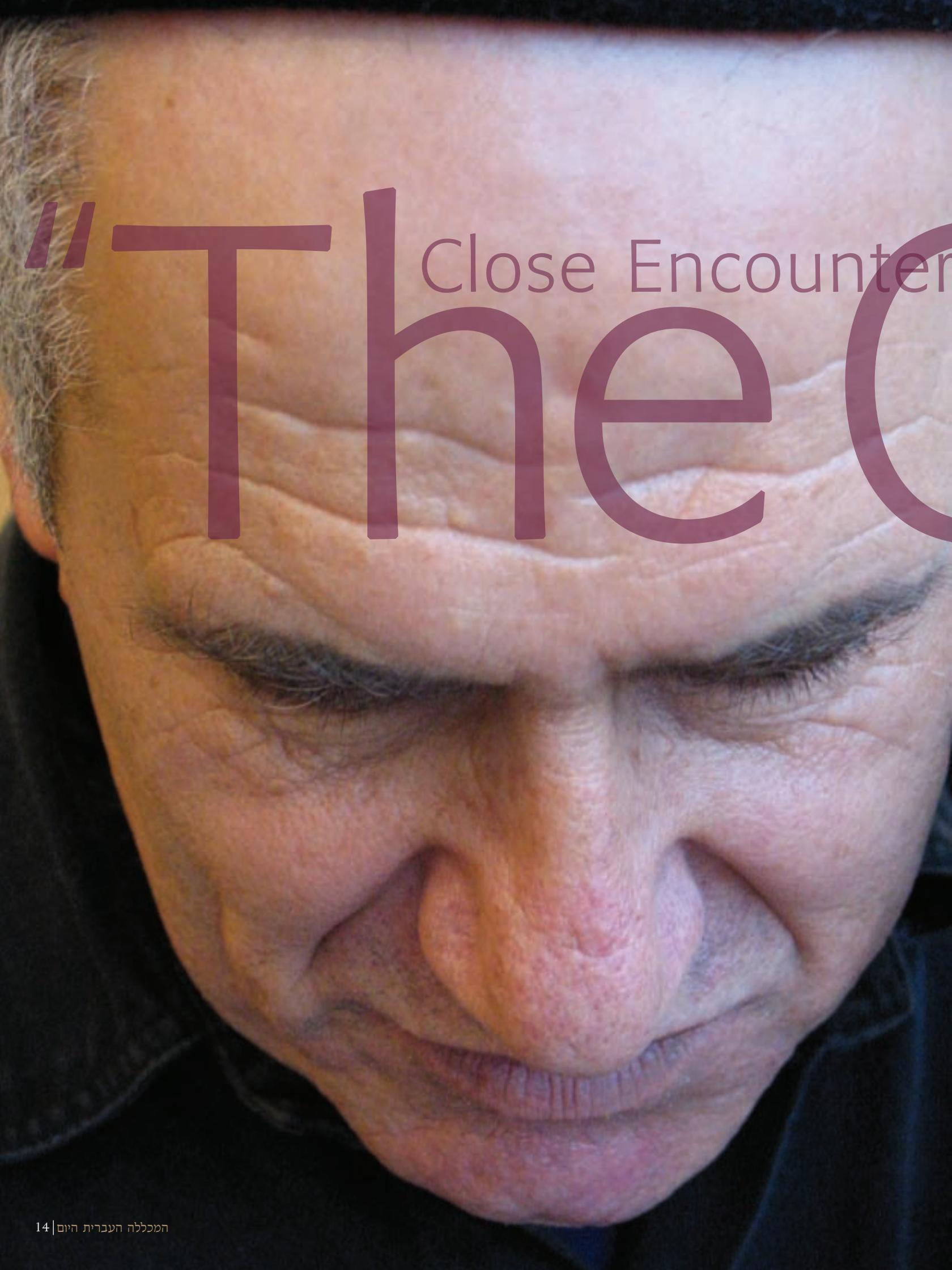
The gift enables the College to engage a leading educator to guide research, training and curriculum development for the growing field. "I don't believe there are any other endowed professorships in Jewish special education—or even any other professors of Jewish special education—in the United States," says Dr. Scott Sokol, founding director



of the Jewish Special Education Program. But the benefits of Korman's donation go much deeper.

Specifically, the program will tap its new funds to train greater numbers of credentialed Jewish special educators; to teach the College's rabbinical, cantorial and Jewish education students about the concerns of special needs populations; to research and develop effective teaching techniques and curricula; to expand services to the College's own students with special needs; and to advocate within the Jewish community on behalf of the estimated 10 to 15 percent of Jews with mild to severe disabilities. To help realize those goals, in October Dr. Sandy Miller-Jacobs joined Hebrew College as Director of Jewish Special Education Programs (see page 8).

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Close Encounter

s with Other"

Mohammad Husein *MAJS'07*

In 2002, a curious meeting took place between two men in the lobby of the King David Hotel. Both were born in Jerusalem on the exact same day in 1954, had a passion for Jewish studies and the Hebrew language, and desired a peaceful conclusion to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. But the similarities ended there. One of the men, an Israeli-born American distance-learning expert—whose father, an ardent Zionist, helped bomb the King David Hotel in 1946—was born on the Israeli side of the Green Line. The other, a Palestinian schoolteacher from Ramallah, hailed from the then-Jordanian side.

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The American, Nathan Ehrlich, Dean of Hebrew College Online (HCO), and the Palestinian, Mohammad Husein, had come from worlds asunder to discuss their shared love of Jewish texts, and how Husein could pursue his studies in a world where Jewish texts are scarce.

His road to that meeting—and, ultimately, to earning an online Master of Arts in Jewish Studies (MAJS) degree this June—was unpaved, to say the least. Born into the life of a refugee, Husein faced much economic hardship. Despite his parents' illiteracy, he became a "reading machine" and eventually earned an undergraduate degree in sociology and psychology. But limited opportunities undermined his hopes to continue with graduate work and an academic career. Instead, he worked as a truck driver and took other jobs to support his wife, a librarian, and their three children. And found the seeds of his next career within a conflict that circumscribed his entire existence.

"We face everyday assaults on Gaza and the West Bank, along with hundreds of checkpoints that impede our movements," says Husein. "People can't be neutral toward

"Peace needs people armed with knowledge about the other side. My concern is to get knowledge and to contribute humbly in the peace effort."

these things, but despite everything, many Palestinians believe a good solution cannot be by force. The Palestinians and Israelis have one of two solutions—to accept each other and make peace, or to end with total destruction for both. There's no third choice: Peace is the choice. And peace needs people armed with knowledge about the other side. My concern is to get knowledge and to contribute humbly in the peace effort."

With that goal in mind, Husein spent several years teaching himself as much as he could about Judaism and the Hebrew language, and eventually introduced Hebrew language studies at the Ramallah YMCA. His classes drew lawyers, social workers and others interested in learning Hebrew, as well as a fair amount of animosity from some members of his community. Meanwhile, he longed to learn more about Judaism, but found a limited selection of materials on the subject in Palestinian libraries—no Midrash or Talmud on the shelves, no books published by a Jewish, Israeli or Zionist institution. Frustrated, Husein decided to go abroad to continue his studies. He applied in 2002 to a number of Israeli universities, but received no response. That's when he searched online and found HCO.

Following the meeting with Ehrlich, Husein was accepted into the MAJS Online program in 2003. After two semesters online, he came to Hebrew College to fulfill his residency requirement. Thanks to a full

scholarship from HCO and full room-and-board from the Andover Newton Theological School, he completed the on-campus component of the online master's program over the next two years.

Meeting "The Other" in Text

At Hebrew College, Mohammad deepened his understanding of Judaism and "the other," both in text and in person. For "Three Modern Jewish Philosophers—Rosenzweig, Buber, Soloveitchik," a course taught in the fall by Steve Copeland, Adjunct Assistant Professor of Jewish Thought and Education, Husein wrote a paper on "the between," a key concept advanced by the three great thinkers. "These were philosophers who celebrated dialogue, difference and a non-mystical approach," says Copeland. "Likewise, Mohammad's path is one that celebrates differences—including those that some may view as irreconcilable—and welcomes an authentic encounter with "the other."

Through his coursework, Husein unearthed Midrash, Talmud and other Jewish sources that he couldn't obtain in Ramallah. In the process, he discovered how important the religious dimension is to Jewish and Israeli culture, and how that very dimension could serve as a bridge across the Green Line—a bridge held up by the many common threads woven into Judaism and Islam in the Bible, the Qur'an and other classic texts. In preparing his final project for the MAJS degree, "The Binding of Isaac in Judaism and Islam," Husein marveled at how many basic theological concepts, from monotheism to martyrdom, find expression in both religions.

Husein presented the project in English to the faculty and student community gathered at Hebrew College's Executive Dining Room in December 2006, but he ultimately hopes to publish it in Arabic. "If I do, my people will gain new knowledge about both Jews and their own faith," he says. For one thing, they might learn something known to few Islamic scholars—that early Moslems, even those close to the Prophet Muhammad, originally believed that Isaac, not Ishmael, was taken by Abraham to the altar. It was only after the Muhammadian dynasty, notes Husein, that the Qur'an was interpreted to point to Ishmael as the intended sacrifice.

During Husein's stay at Hebrew College, he also explored Jewish Arabic literature—texts written in the Middle Ages in Arab cultures by Jewish thinkers such as Maimonides and Ibn Ezra Judah Halevy. He's now working on a draft of a book in Arabic on Maimonides' *Thirteen Principles of Jewish Faith*. "A Yemenite rabbi wrote a manuscript in the Middle Ages that provides commentaries on the *Thirteen Principles*, and the language is very Islamic," he says. "The *Principles* serve as a good introduction to Muslims about Judaism."

“I don’t try to appease anyone or behave according to any expectations,” Husein says. “When I sit and study with my fellow students, they forget I’m from ‘the other side.’”

Meeting “The Other” in Person

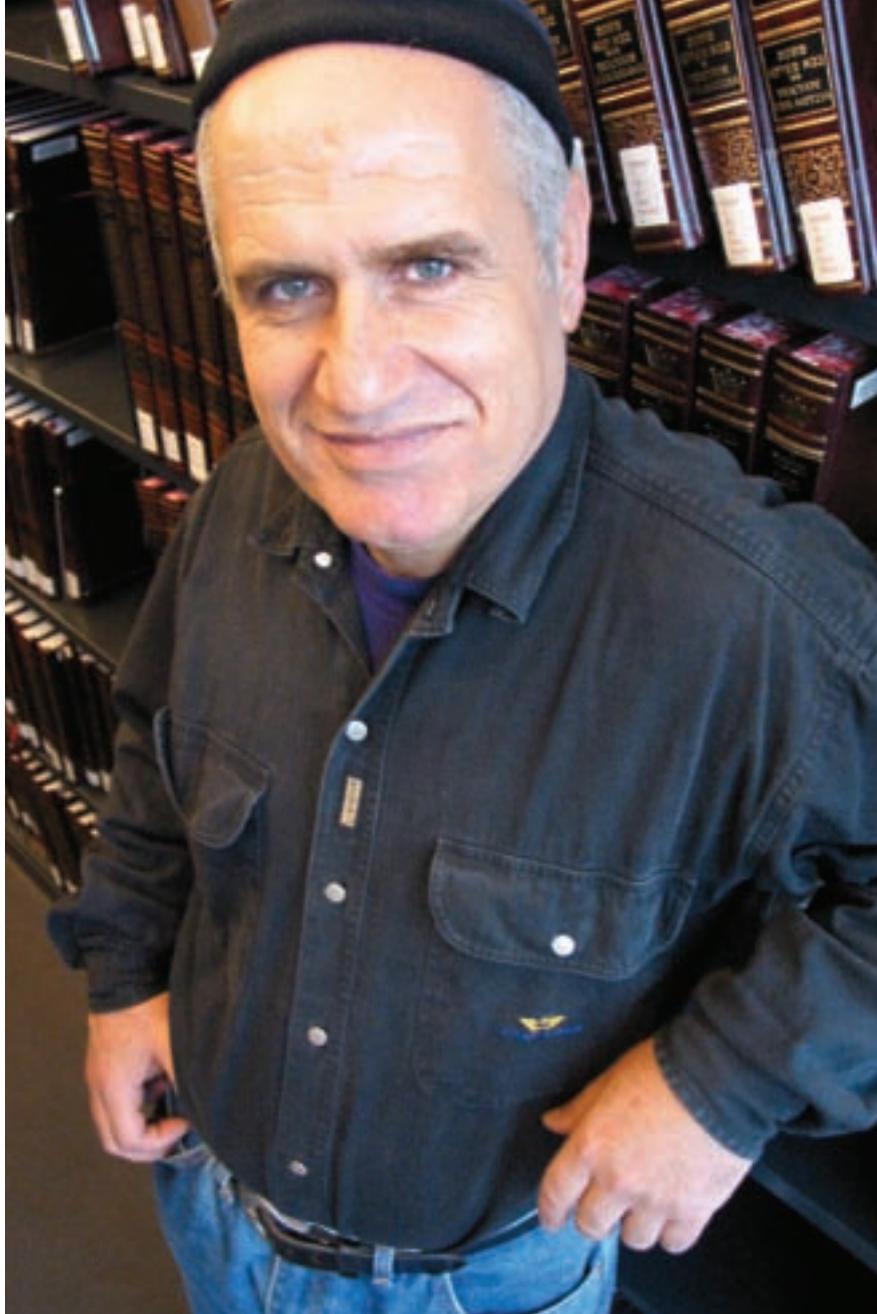
Steve Copeland describes Husein as someone who refuses to accept answers that reflect only one side of a complex reality. “Mohammad’s experience as ‘the occupied’ so fatefully involves his being apprehended as an object for observation and control, rather than as a fellow subject for a conversation,” he says. “With great sensitivity and graciousness, he seeks—in pursuit of a life of responsibility—to learn from the other’s unique perspective.”

In a meeting last year at Hebrew College’s Gann Library, where he worked part-time, Mohammad Husein spoke thoughtfully, while setting his visitor at ease. A gentle man with warm blue eyes and a bald head fringed by salt-and-pepper hair, he sported the typical casual uniform of an American college student: jeans, running shoes and a sweatshirt—with the words “Camp Yavneh” emblazoned across the front.

His attire wasn’t the only reason Mohammad blended in well at Hebrew College. Another is that he grew up in a relatively open-minded cultural atmosphere in Ramallah. He also proved to be a quick study of the English language. But mostly, Husein, who claims no tie to any institution or organization back home, didn’t seek to represent anyone but himself. “I don’t try to appease anyone or behave according to any expectations,” he says. “When I sit and study with my fellow students, they forget I’m from ‘the other side.’”

Sometimes, however, it was precisely Mohammad’s “otherness” that opened up doors between himself and the Jewish students in his program. In conversations with friends on campus, at numerous Shabbat dinners and on hikes in local mountains, he tapped into a pronounced eagerness for peace between Israel and its Palestinian neighbors. “Most people I met were interested to know ‘the other,’ to live with ‘the other,’” says Husein. “Unlike many Israelis, they really want to know what Palestinians think.”

Husein also tapped into the rhythms of Jewish communal life, especially through the Shabbat experience, which he describes as “very beautiful.” As a regular at the Newton Centre Minyan, which meets every Saturday morning at Hebrew College, he was often invited to congregants’ homes. “He’s gotten a real sense of a Jewish community,” says Nathan Ehrlich, “and, by bravely immersing himself within a Jewish prayer environment, he unexpectedly reconnected with his own spiritual traditions. In the process, he and we experienced a bridge



of hope between our two worlds. The more we do that with each other, the more we’re able to humanize each other and learn how to walk and live together.”

Return To Ramallah

Back in Ramallah, Husein now aims to advance that ideal in his work, either as a college professor or staff member of a non-governmental organization pursuing peace between Palestinians and Israelis. Drawing on both his studies and the many relationships he has built with Jews at Hebrew College, he hopes to introduce a more realistic understanding of Jews and Judaism into Palestinian culture.

In so doing, Husein can counter misrepresentations of Judaism that exist in the Arab world, suggests Hebrew College Provost Barry Mesch, lead adviser to MAJS students. In the long run, adds Mesch, Husein can frame the Jewish tradition in more positive terms: “I think that Mohammad will be an important voice for conveying to the Palestinians what Judaism is and what it stands for.” **HCT**

Like Anything Successful

MOSHE BAR-ASHER ON THE STATE OF HEBREW

Professor Moshe Bar-Asher, recipient of the prestigious Israel Prize, President of the Academy of the Hebrew Language and Professor in the Hebrew Language Department at Hebrew University, was still in Jerusalem when I interviewed him by telephone in December 2006. He arrived at Hebrew College in February 2007 to lecture and to teach a course, in Hebrew, about the history of the Hebrew language.

As President of the Academy of the Hebrew Language, Bar-Asher heads the highest institution for scientific research about the Hebrew language. The role of the Academy is to direct the development of the Hebrew language, including the creation of new words based on historical research.

His spoken language is a delight to the ear: a lovely, pleasant and not overly lofty Hebrew, fluid, and spiced with Hebrew and Aramaic idioms. His pronounces the letters *ayin* and *het* authentically, but naturally. His Jerusalemite pronunciation has some of the charm of the past, but it is also contemporary.

The following dialogue has been translated by Harvey Bock. (Brackets indicate translator's explanations.)

Nathanson: Where does Hebrew stand today—in Israel, in particular, but in general, as well?

Bar-Asher: Hebrew is like anything successful. When something is successful, it is taken for granted. And anything that is taken for granted is also in danger. For example, when did the revival of Hebrew succeed? When it was understood that Hebrew is spoken not only in the markets and stores and in public, but that university and Technion classes can also be conducted in Hebrew. This is essentially what made the revival of Hebrew an accomplished fact. Yet, today, universities—which are constantly looking toward the United States—conduct conferences entirely in English, even when it is not necessary.

I can unequivocally say today that Hebrew has enjoyed an enormous success. I can tell you, for example, that at the Academy of the Hebrew Language we do not regard as errors linguistic developments that emerge from the living language. In any living language, there are developments of extraordinary vitality. But, as I said at the outset, anything successful is taken for granted. The State of Israel came into being and was then taken for granted; people are unconcerned that its existence might be in jeopardy.

The same is true of the Israel Defense Force and of many other areas in our lives.

I think that the Hebrew language is, without doubt, one of our great successes. But there are a number of regrettable developments, which can still be remedied. I spoke earlier about the impact of English on everyday speech. There is a strong English-language influence on journalistic Hebrew, a great deal of translation from English. For example, people no longer “ascend” [עוֹלִים] to Israel—they “make aliyah” [עוֹשִׂים עֲלֵיהָ]; people no longer “photograph” [מַצְטָלְמִים]—they “take a picture” [לֹקְחִים תְּמוּנָה].

Or take the example of issues that prior generations wrestled with. Would pronunciation be “more Hebrew” if the letters *het* and *ayin* were annunciated with their historical pronunciations [as they are pronounced by Jews from Arabic-speaking countries], or if the letter *resh* were pronounced with an apical “r” [like the letter “r” is pronounced in Spanish or Russian]? Questions like these are still unresolved; some people pronounce these letters one way and some the other. People exercise different degrees of caution regarding the influence of English. In general, I think that Hebrew has enjoyed, and continues to enjoy, success.

We must also look at this question from another angle. Every day at the Academy of the Hebrew Language we receive 40 to 50 inquiries from the public about language issues. The audience interested in language and language issues is very large. In three weeks, there will be a huge event at the Israeli stock exchange, dedicated to Hebrew and to the Academy of the Hebrew Language. Here is the latest breaking development: Yesterday the brand-new *Dictionary of Banking and Financial Market Terminology* was published.

Nathanson: Can you give me a few examples of words from the financial field?

Bar-Asher: I am holding in my hands a copy of the new dictionary and opening it to a random page. Look at, for example, the word פְּדִיּוֹן יוֹמִי, meaning an “on-call loan.” In this case, we did not need a new word; we deployed the word פְּדִיּוֹן. The word appears once in the Tanakh with a *mem* [rather than a *nun*] at the end. So, we have a word that melds the words פְּדִיּוֹן, “redemption,” and יוֹם, “day.” We generally do not like words of this type, such as דְּחָפוֹר, “bulldozer” [melding the roots דָּחָף, “push,” and חָפַר, “dig”] or רַמְזוֹר, “traffic light” [melding the root רָמַז, “signal,”

כמו כל דבר שהצליח

משה בר-אשר על מצב העברית

פרופסור משה בר-אשר, חתן פרס ישראל, נשיא האקדמיה ללשון העברית ופרופסור בחוג ללשון עברית באוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים, היה עדיין בירושלים כשראייתו אותה בטלפון בדצמבר 2006. הוא הגיע למכללה העברית בפברואר 2007 כדי להרצות בעברית קורס בתולדות השפה העברית. כשהראיון יראה אור, פרופסור בר-אשר, מן הסתם, כבר יסיים את הוראתו במכללה. שפתו ערבה לאוזן. עברית יפה ונעימה, לא גבוהה מדי, קולחת ומשובצת בביטויים בארמית ובעברית. הח' והע' מבוטאות בטבעיות. יש בעברית שלו 'טעם של פעם' בניחוח של מבטא ירושלמי ועם זאת היא עכשווית.

נתנזון: איפה עומדת העברית היום בעיקר בארץ אבל גם בכלל? מה מצבך?

בר-אשר: העברית היא כמו כל דבר שהצליח. כל דבר שהצליח הופך להיות דבר מובן מאליו ואז, כל דבר שהוא מובן מאליו הוא גם נמצא בסכנה. למשל, מתי הצליחה תחיית הלשון העברית? כאשר הבינו שלא רק בשוק ובחניויות וברשות הרבים מדברים וכותבים עברית אלא גם לימודים באוניברסיטה ובטכניון יכולים להתנהל בעברית. זה היה בעצם הפיכתה של תחיית הדיבור העברי למעשה מושלם. היום, האוניברסיטאות שפולות כל כך לכיוון ארצות הברית, מרשות לעצמן לקיים הרבה כינוסים שכולם על טהרת האנגלית גם כשאין צורך בזה. אז אני אומר אין מה לדבר שהעברית היום הצליחה הצלחה גדולה. אני יכול להגיד לך למשל, באקדמיה ללשון העברית, כשאנחנו דנים בתופעות, אנחנו לא מסתכלים על תופעות שבאות מהלשון החיה כעל תופעות משובשות. יש בלשון החיה תופעות של חיוניות בלתי רגילה. אבל כפי שאמרתי

בתחילת דברי, כל דבר שהצליח הפך לדבר מובן מאליו. קמה המדינה והייתה לדבר מובן מאליו. אנשים לא חוששים שאפשר לסכן את קיומה. אותו הדבר לגבי צ.ה.ל. אותו הדבר לגבי הרבה תחומים אחרים בחיים שלנו. אני חושב שהעברית,

בלי שום ספק, היא אחת ההצלחות הגדולות. אם כי כמובן יש להצטער על כמה תופעות שאין לראות אותן כאבודות אבל למשל, דברתי קודם על חיים שמתנהלים באנגלית. יש השפעה של האנגלית בתחום העברית הנכתבת בעיתונות. הרבה תרגום מאנגלית. אנשים כבר לא עולים לארץ אלא "עושים עלייה", אנשים לא מצטלמים אלא "לוקחים תמונה". או למשל דברים שהדורות הראשונים נאבקו בהם. האם המבטא יהיה יותר עברי במימוש ה-ח' וה-ע' ור' קדמית או לא קדמית. דברים כאלה עדיין תלויים ועומדים. יש שהוגים כך יש הוגים כך. יש אנשים שנוהרים במידה כזו או אחרת מהשפעות האנגלית. בסך הכל אני חושב שהעברית צלחה והצליחה. יש לראות קטגוריה אחרת, אנחנו מקבלים באקדמיה ללשון העברית ארבעים עד חמישים פניות ביום מציבור רחב בשאלות בענייני לשון. קהל המתעניינים בלשון ובשאלות של לשון הוא גדול מאד. בעוד שלושה שבועות יהיה ארוע ענק בבורסה מוקדש ללשון העברית ולאקדמיה. הנה אני מספר לך חדשה טרייה, יצא אתמול "המילון למונחי הבנקאות ושוק ההון".



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and the word אור “light”]. But in this case, since the word פְּדִיּוֹם appears in the Tanakh and the economists wanted a term for an on-call loan, we adopted פְּדִיּוֹם. The bankers liked the word; they adopted it, and it entered the language.

Nathanson: There are new words that the public absorbs instantly. And there are lovely, thoughtful and needed words that it does not—such as the word יַעֲפֹת, “jet lag” [which is constructed from the root יֵעַף, “tire,” plays on the root עוֹף, “fly,” and uses a pattern commonly used for words that refer to diseases, such as צַהֲבָת, “jaundice”]. What is your opinion on this?

Bar-Asher: The Academy deals not only with the introduction of new words. Foremost, it studies the Hebrew language over the course of its 3,000 years, from 1000 BCE through today. So when we came up with the word תִּשָּׁר, “tip,” it turned out, according to *The Historical Dictionary of the Hebrew Language*, that we had not invented it, since it already exists in medieval Jewish piyyut [liturgical poems]. Or take the word מְרַדֵּף, “chase”—which the songwriter and TV moderator Yaron London reintroduced in the lyrics of his song about terrorist manhunts; it was originally used in the ancient documents found at Qumran. So, I believe that any word requires luck, in order to be absorbed into the living language.

I wrote an article in *Leshonenu La’am* about “The Manufacturing of Words at the Academy of the Hebrew Language.” In it, I mention that, among the international language academies, we are in first place in the field of giving old words new meanings. There are academies in which ten percent of the “new” words are accepted, and there are those with an eight-percent acceptance rate. We exceed 40 percent.

The word מְשִׁבָּן, “answering machine,” was introduced into the language virtually overnight. There is no question that as soon as we get a word into the media—television, radio and journalism—it enters the language. For example, the word תְּשׁוּאָה, “yield”: People, who go to the bank every day, required this word, so it was easily accepted. On the other hand, the word יַעֲפֹת, “jet lag,” does not appear in the press, so it has not been absorbed.

Nathanson: What challenges does the Hebrew language face?

Bar-Asher: The challenge is to minimize the use of foreign words as much as possible, especially because of the current trend of borrowing from English. At one time, there was not a sign in Tel Aviv that was in a foreign language. Today you can pass 200 signs and find perhaps three in Hebrew. This is a major challenge, and not so much a linguistic challenge as a cultural one.

I just came from a meeting of a committee for medical terms, where we adopted the chapter on urological terminology. I asked the doctors, what is with you? You love Latin words! That’s not true, they told me: “We have internal conversations, but we also converse with patients; and with patients we prefer to use Hebrew terms.” We now have twelve professional committees—committees for legal, photographic, medical and library-science terms, among others—to maximize Hebrew terminology used in each field.

The world is a small village today. But within this village, each society can preserve its character only if it preserves its culture. And what protects a culture more than anything is a national language. In Finland, for example, even the word “telephone” has been translated into Finnish.

I will give you three words that we introduced yesterday. Sociologists wanted a word for a person becoming religious, just as there is the word הַלּוֹן for “secularization.” They came up with the word הַדְּתָה, “rinsing.” They were undoubtedly thinking about the word הַדְּתָה, “rinsing.” We accepted it. We also accepted the word אֶל-רִיחַ for “deodorant.” And we accepted the word פְּרָקְמִי for “modular,” based on a request from the Standards Institution of Israel [the government body that ensures quality and safety of consumer products]. An engineer at the Institution applauded when we accepted the word. “Beautiful,” he said, “Why do we need to use the English word ‘modular,’ when we can use a Hebrew word?”

Nathanson: While we are on the subject of new words, there is a word that we need here in North America, perhaps even more than it is needed in Israel: a word for a woman rabbi.

Bar-Asher: There was a proposal to use the word רַבָּה, but no official decision has been adopted. I, myself, use the word רַבָּה.

Shai Nathanson directed Hebrew College’s Hebrew language programs and Ulpan for 20 years, until his retirement in July 2007.



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נתנון: אתה יכול לתת לי כמה דוגמאות של מלים בתחום הזה?

בר-אשר: הנה אני מחזיק ביד מולי את המילון החדש. אני פותח את המילון בעמוד מקרי, תראה למשל, "פְּדִיּוֹן יוֹמִי". לא היינו צריכים במקרה זה לחדש מילה אלא שימשנו במילה "פְּדִיּוֹם". המילה הזו מופיעה פעם אחת במקרא באות "מם". אז יש הרכבה של המילה "פְּדִיּוֹן" והמילה "יום". בדרך כלל לא אוהבים מילים כאלה כמו "דְּחָפוֹר" או "רְמְזוֹר" אבל במקרה הזה, הואיל ויש בתנ"ך המילה "פְּדִיּוֹם", ורצו הכלכלנים מילה שתבטא פדיון יומי, אימצנו את המילה "פְּדִיּוֹם". אהבו מאוד את המילה הזו אנשי הבנקאות ואימצו אותה ונכנסה.

נתנון: יש מלים חדשות הנקלטות בציבור כהרף עין ויש מלים, יפות חכמות וגדרשות כמו המילה "יַעֲפֹת" שאינן נקלטות. מה דעתך על כך?

בר-אשר: האקדמיה לא עוסקת רק בחידושי מילים. היא קודם כל חוקרת את הלשון העברית על פני שלושת אלפים שנה. מאלף לפני הספירה ועד היום. אז למשל כשחידשנו את המילה "תְּטָר" התברר במילון ההיסטורי, שבעצם לא חידשנו כי היא כבר קיימת בפיוט. או המילה "מְרַדֶּף" שחידש ירון לונדון בתקופת המרדפים בארץ, נמצאה בקומראן. אז אני אומר, כל מילה צריכה גם מזל. כתבתי מאמר ב"לשונונו לעם" על "חרושת המילים המילים באקדמיה ללשון". בעניין הזה אנחנו עומדים במקום הראשון בעולם מבחינת האקדמיות האחרות ללשון. יש אקדמיות שעשרה אחוז מהמילים שלהן מתקבלות, יש אקדמיות ששמונה אחוז. אנחנו כבר עברנו את הארבעים אחוז. המילה "מְשִׁיבוֹן" חודשה ביום שני וביום שלישי נקלטה. אין שום ספק שברגע שאנחנו מצליחים להכניס

את המילה למדיה (לטלוויזיה, לרדיו ולעיתונות) היא נכנסת. למשל, המילה "תְּשׁוּאָה". אנשים נכנסים לבנק יום וצריכים להשתמש בה אז היא נקלטה. המילה "יַעֲפֹת" היא מילה שלא מופיעה בעיתונות ולכן לא נקלטה.

נתנון: איזה אתגרים עוד עומדים בפני השפה?

בר-אשר: למעט את הלעז ככל האפשר דווקא בגלל האופנה לקחת מן האנגלית. פעם בתל-אביב לא היה שלט של חנות שהיה לועזי. היום אתה יכול לעבור מאתיים שלטים אולי תמצא שלושה עבריים. זה אתגר ממדרגה ראשונה שהוא לא אתגר לשוני אלא אתגר תרבותי. הדבר השני, הנה אני בא משיבה של הוועד למונחי הרפואה. קבלנו עכשיו את הפרק של מונחי האורולוגיה. שאלתי את הרופאים: "מה בכלל העניין שלכם? אתם הרי אוהבים מלים לטיניות." "זה איננו נכון". הם אמרו לי. "יש לנו אמנם שיח בינינו אבל יש לנו גם שיח עם החולים ועם החולים אנחנו מעדיפים לומר להם מונחים בעברית." יש לנו עכשיו שתיים עשרה וועדות מקצועיות וועדה למונחי המשפט, יש לנו וועדה למונחי הצילום, למונחי הרפואה, למונחי הספרנות ועוד. כל התחומים הללו כדי להרבות בתחומים המקצועיים מקסימום של מינוח עברי. היום העולם כפר קטן. אבל בתוך הכפר הקטן הזה כל חברה יכולה לשמור על אופייה רק אם היא תשמור על תרבותה. ומה ששומר יותר מכל על התרבות היא הלשון הלאומית. בפינלנד למשל, אפילו את המילה "טְלֶפּוֹן" תרגמו לפינית. הנה אתן לך את שלוש המילים שחידשנו שלשום. הסוציולוגים רצו מילה להפיכת אדם מחילוני לדתי. כמו שיש "חֶלּוֹן". והמציאו את המילה "הִדְתָּה". ללא ספק הם חשבו על המילה "הִדְתָּה". וקבלנו את המילה. קבלנו את המילה "אֶל-רֵיחַ" לדאודורנט. קבלנו ממודולרי את המילה "פְּרָקְנִי". באה בקשה מ"מכון התקנים". היה שם מהנדס מהמכון שמחא כפיים כשקבלנו את המילה. "איזה יופי" הם אמרו. למה אנחנו צריכים להמשיך להשתמש במילה "מודולרי" כשאנחנו יכולים להשתמש במילה עברית.

נתנון: אם כבר במילים חדשות עסקינן, מילה שהיא נחוצה לנו כאן אולי יותר אפילו מאשר היא נחוצה בארץ. המילה "רב" לאישה שהיא רב.

בר-אשר: הכוונה היתה להשתמש במילה "רְבָה" אבל לא התקבלה החלטה רשמית בעניין הזה אני משתמש במילה "רְבָה".



In Search of
**JEWISH PHIL
GREAT**

Who are Today's Bubers and Rosenzweigs?

What are we?
What is our life?
What is our kindness?
What is our righteousness?
What is our salvation?
What is our strength?
What is our might?
—From Shharit morning service

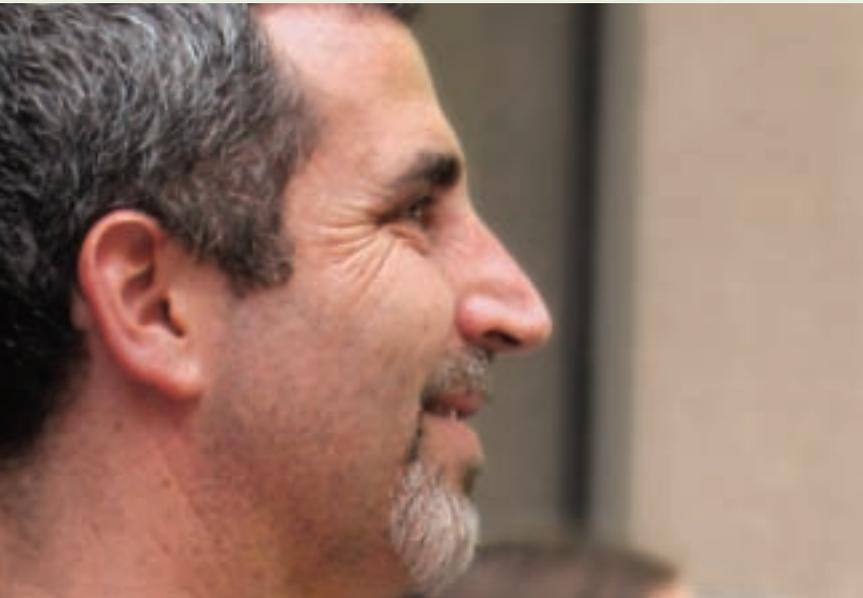
Decisions. We face them every morning, as soon as we awaken. Should we go to work or call in sick? Take on more projects or cut back? Spend more time with our kids or slack off? Attend a peace rally or go sailing? At a superficial level, these choices and tradeoffs, some conscious, some unnoticed, define everyday life. At a deeper level, if we are aware, our choices hinge on answers to fundamental questions about how we understand ourselves, how we understand reality and how best to live within that reality. Fundamental questions that concern, among other things, whether or not God exists, what it really means to be human and what constitutes true happiness.

PHILOSOPHICAL FITNESS



From Plato to Soloveitchik, philosophers and religious thinkers have wrestled with those fundamentals. Whether applying classical Greek rational analysis or deriving insights from rigorous interpretations of core religious texts, they have shared the same pursuit: how to understand the nature of reality and how best to live one's life. And in the process of that quest, they have framed the questions and answers for the rest of us.

For modern Jews steeped in Western thought and rational analysis, a Jewish philosophical approach to discerning universal truths may seem provincial, at best; irrelevant, at worst. But for those who wrestle with defining a Jewish worldview, Jewish philosophy is key to the debate. Melding the worlds of Jerusalem and Athens, some Jewish philosophers apply insights derived from Jewish and Western philosophical sources to advance a worldview for all humankind, while others attempt to buttress Jewish theological claims and halakhah with rational arguments



“American Jews want to know, as human beings as well as Jews, whether particular beliefs, claims or norms are not only true for Jews, but pass muster, period,” says Avi Bernstein-Nahar.

that appeal to the Western-educated mind. All seek answers to what it means to live an authentic Jewish life.

That philosophical quest is essential to the core human dilemma of understanding our place in the universe—all the more so at a time when humankind is pressed by basic threats to survival: global warming, international terrorism, the specter of pandemics. So who, if anyone, among Jewish philosophers and thinkers today, is tackling this most fundamental question about meaningful existence?

One hundred years ago, a similar query would have

yielded two answers: Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. In early 20th century Germany, these two young Jewish men sought to stir up a rebellious search for an authentic modern Jewish life among assimilated Jews—and eventually became towering pathfinders in modern Jewish philosophy.

An avid student of philosophy and Hasidism, Buber developed a worldview that reduces all relationships to remote encounters that objectify the other (“I-it”), and full-fledged, mutual encounters that recognize the divinity and essence of the other (“I-thou”). Buber’s philosophy suggested that a meaningful life values the latter type of relationship, one that ultimately connects human beings to God. Distilling Hasidism for modern man, Buber described the ideal life as one that recognizes the abiding presence of this ultimate relationship in all daily experiences.

Trained in Western and existentialist philosophy, Rosenzweig addressed his most influential work to Jews. In his signature book, *The Star of Redemption*, he depicted God’s revelation as an ongoing process that empowers the individual to achieve the purpose for which he or she was created. In his view, fulfilling that purpose entails a rich understanding of the Torah and Jewish law, so Rosenzweig devoted much of his life to positioning halakhah in terms that would be authentic and accessible for assimilated, Western-educated Jews.

Although Buber and Rosenzweig drew small crowds during their lifetimes, their ideas proved sufficiently powerful to hit home with countless Jews (and non-Jews) ever since. Buber’s philosophy continues to inspire many to reconsider how they relate to the world and God; and Rosenzweig’s push for a more relevant and accessible framing of halakhah led him to create the *Lehrhaus* in Frankfurt, Germany, an “open Jewish university” that sparked an adult Jewish learning movement that continues to this day.

By formulating a compelling worldview that provides guidance for our daily lives, advancing ideas rooted in both Jewish and Western philosophical traditions, and delivering an articulate message that ultimately resonated with significant numbers of Jews, Buber and Rosenzweig established themselves as early 20th century giants in Jewish philosophy. In doing so, they strongly influenced how Jews think about the world and their place in it, and, ultimately, their life choices.

Which brings us back to the present: Who in the past 30 years have stood out as giants in Jewish philosophy? Who are the Bubers and Rosenzweigs of our time?

Admittedly, the criteria listed above—a compelling worldview, derived from Jewish and Western philosophical traditions, which resonates with many Jews—constitute an intellectual gauntlet that few minds can breach. For starters, it’s difficult to advance a normative philosophy

that many Westerners will embrace. “We don’t like people telling us what to do and we’re not sure that anyone knows better than we do,” says Avi Bernstein-Nahar, Dean of Educational Planning and Development and head of HC’s Jewish Philosopher’s Project, an effort to bring philosophical debate into the mainstream of the College’s culture. It’s also no easy task to fuse Western and Jewish perspectives in a convincing way. “American Jews want to know, as human beings as well as Jews, whether particular beliefs, claims or norms are not only true for Jews, but pass muster *period*,” Bernstein-Nahar stresses. “If you paint yourself into a corner by saying these beliefs, claims or norms simply come out of Jewish tradition, you’re not going to satisfy the majority of people.”

To hone in on this generation’s Jewish philosophical giants (or to establish the lack thereof), we turned to a small but well-informed sample of 16 scholars at Hebrew College and other U.S. campuses with extensive training in Jewish philosophy or intellectual history. While their conclusions are by no means definitive, they do give us a taste of trends in contemporary Jewish philosophy and thought.

TODAY’S GIANTS?

For most of these scholars, only one individual stands out as a major force in recent Jewish philosophy: Emmanuel Levinas. Levinas died in France in 1995, but remains a contemporary figure that many view as a worthy successor to Buber and Rosenzweig. A student of Husserl, Heidegger and other German philosophers, Levinas lost his entire family in Lithuania and did time in two prisoner-of-war camps during World War II. When he reunited with his wife and daughter (hidden by French nuns) after the war, he began to question the underlying philosophy of a nation that had wiped out millions of Jews and other minorities.

Levinas decided that the purely rationalistic manner in which philosophy had been pursued in Germany—one that built intellectual systems that forced square pegs into round holes—may have been part of the problem. “He saw the genocide as a case of hatred and intolerance for ‘the other,’ for the person that doesn’t fit,” says Jacob Meskin, Assistant Professor of Jewish Education at Hebrew College. “And he asked: Why can’t philosophy be based on a recognition and respect for otherness?” Levinas spent the next 40 years crafting a philosophy that defined being human as responsibility for “the other,” and that saw our encounters with fellow human beings as a kind of revelation in which we might hear at least an echo of the divine voice.

Levinas communicated his ideas in a universal language rooted in Athens. “His philosophy is philosophy,” says Meskin. “It’s not a philosophy about Judaism.” But Meskin

“Levinas saw the genocide as a case of hatred and intolerance for ‘the other,’” says Jacob Meskin. “And he asked: Why can’t philosophy be based on a recognition and respect for otherness?”



is quick to point out that while Judaism is almost never mentioned in Levinas’s philosophical work, there are “tons of Judaism” between the lines. Parallel to his philosophical career, Levinas studied and produced a series of lectures on the Talmud that remain influential. “One reason for this is that he mined Jewish texts for the deeper meanings they hold for moderns, thus laying a foundation for less religious Jews to retrieve Judaism,” says Claire Katz, Associate Professor of Philosophy and Women’s Studies at Texas A&M University, and chair of a recent Association for Jewish Studies panel on Levinas and the Talmud.

Today Levinas is the subject of a growing number of books, university courses and conferences. His other-directed philosophy has inspired people of all faiths, and his approach to Jewish texts has captivated many Jews of divergent beliefs. “We do live in a Levinasian moment right now,” says Eugene R. Sheppard, Associate Professor of Modern Jewish History and Thought at Brandeis University. “I don’t think his star has ever been higher.”

Sheppard argues that Levinas’s ethical emphasis responds to the present and recent realities of genocide, persecution of minority groups and the failure to recognize legitimate, but crucial, differences of other groups. “Whereas these events point to an ethical void in the modern world,” he says, “Levinas unearths ways in which ethics compels attention to the unassimilable integrity of things and people outside oneself.”

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Despite Levinas's high ranking among the scholars we surveyed, some view his appeal as limited. Summing up this sentiment, Bernstein-Nahar remarks, "Outside of his lectures on the Talmud, his writing is impenetrable for many readers. Levinas won't work for most people most of the time, because of the way he writes, and because his answers are neither very directive, nor intended to reach beyond a small public of philosophers and intellectuals."

Meskin notes that in his Jewish writings, Levinas stresses the values to be gained from engagement with Jewish tradition, but refuses to direct his readers regarding the nature of this engagement. "It could be intellectual, or religious or cultural," Meskin observes, "and students of Levinas have in fact gone in all of these different directions."

In addition to Levinas, some scholars in our sample identified two living Jewish philosophers whom they believe satisfy our three criteria: David Novak and Peter Ochs. Both blend contemporary philosophical reasoning with a deep understanding of the Jewish tradition and have produced work that promises to impact large numbers of Jews.

Randi Rashkover, Professor of Religious Studies and Theology at York College in Pennsylvania, believes that David Novak is probably the leading Jewish philosopher of our time. Novak, a professor of philosophy, religion and

Jewish studies at the University of Toronto, founder of the Institute for Traditional Judaism and author of *Covenantal Rights: A Study in Jewish Political Theory* (Princeton University Press, 2000), advances a Jewish social ethics that is both philosophically rigorous and lodged in Jewish tradition. Drawing on Western philosophical and rabbinic sources, Novak explores the tensions between individual rights and obligations to a community and God, and provides rational justification to link halakhah to many of the concerns of society-at-large. "Himself an active voice in a range of socially and politically dynamic issues, including Jewish-Islamic relations, abortion, war and homosexuality, Novak's work has inspired many Jews in North America to freely articulate their religious positions in the public square," says Rashkover.

Through rigorous arguments, Novak has reframed contemporary theological discourse and rejected the impasse between religion and secularism as based on false premises. "Central to Novak's theology," write Rashkover and Martin Kavka in their introduction to the forthcoming *Tradition in the Public Square: A David Novak Reader*, "is an account of covenantal life as a communal process of testifying to the nearness of God while engaging in a world with others who are outside of this community." His social ethics, which traverse the political spectrum from liberal to conservative, derive from "his broader portrait of a covenantal life as perpetually negotiating between prior formulations of Jewish law (halakhah) and the evidence of the world in a way that permits a balance between halakhic responsiveness to change and sustained integrity to the legal tradition."

Peter Ochs, Edgar M. Bronfman Professor of Modern Judaic Studies at the University of Virginia and co-editor of *Textual Reasonings: Jewish Philosophy and Text Study at the End of the Twentieth Century* (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2003), is striving to generate a discourse between Jewish and Western philosophical traditions that enlarges both. Toward that end, Ochs has developed two philosophical and theological movements that, while largely academic, are gaining momentum in the broader community. The first, textual reasoning, brings Jewish philosophers and talmudic scholars together to apply both rational and traditional perspectives to the study of Jewish texts, a trend that has accelerated in recent years on college campuses. The other movement, scriptural reasoning, brings Jews, Christians and Muslims together to apply rational and traditional perspectives to the study of their religious texts, and to use that text study as a positive springboard for mutual understanding and social change. "Continuing the *Lehrhaus* tradition started by Franz Rosenzweig and Martin Buber," says Rashkover, "Ochs presses Jewish communities to enjoy and reconsider their textual tradition as a tool for understanding and repairing problems facing Jews in a troubled world."



Some attribute the lack of modern Jewish philosophical giants to the absence of cultural ferment. "Are the times in which we live as interesting as the *fin de siècle* and Weimar?" asks David Starr. "What are the issues here—what kind of iPod to buy?"

NO GIANTS IN OUR MIDST?

While acknowledging the contributions of Levinas and others in the field, most of the scholars we surveyed stated that no major Jewish philosopher has emerged in the past 30 years, and offered myriad reasons to explain why. Some argued that it's usually too early to tell if someone is a major Jewish philosopher while he or she is still alive, and that no one has come forth who exudes the charisma of a Buber or Rosenzweig. Others cited the failure of Jewish studies programs and philosophy departments to cultivate Jewish philosophers.

"Jewish studies has largely been, since the beginning of its explosion in 1967, captive to historians and philologists and very much subject to what's afflicted all universities—specialization and the demand for objectivity," says Bernstein-Nahar. The result: scholars churning out commentaries on philosophers, rather than coining their own. "Americans, by and large, are not trained to be philosophers, but to teach philosophy and read other people's texts," argues Claire Katz. "For many Americans, it's difficult to refer to themselves as philosophers, as opposed to saying, 'I teach philosophy' or 'I am a professor of philosophy.'"

Some lay blame on the absence of cultural ferment. "There was a lot of *Sturm und Drang* in post-World War I European life that one could argue doesn't exist in American Jewish life," says historian David Starr, Dean of Hebrew College's Me'ah program, who notes that Buber and Rosenzweig confronted the simultaneous rise of capitalism, urbanism and rampant assimilation. While not discounting the serious challenges posed by such issues as international terrorism and global warming, he questions how much these problems have prompted significant changes in our lifestyles and philosophies. "Are the times in which we live as interesting as the *fin de siècle* and Weimar?" asks Starr. "What are the issues here—what kind of iPod to buy?"

One key missing ingredient in the philosophical stew may be an ongoing, face-to-face community in which meaningful experiences are shared. "A leader or a teacher can only exist in relation to a community of some sort," says Steve Copeland, Adjunct Assistant Professor of Jewish Thought at Hebrew College. He argues that unlike the German Jews of Buber and Rosenzweig's time who did participate in such communities, American Jews experience much of their lives in compartmentalized institutions—they go to work with one group of people and celebrate life's passages with another—primarily as employees or members or consumers. "It's difficult if not impossible in such a context for the genuine human teacher to find us," adds Copeland, "much less find her own voice first."



"A great philosopher or artist in her or his relations with self, world and spirit includes support, encouragement and affirmation of where we are presently, who we are and have been, but is dialectically very undermining as well," says Steve Copeland. "She gives us something we didn't expect."

Also lacking in America is a rich intellectual culture, say many scholars. "The great figures of the late 19th and 20th centuries were the products of European civilization and, especially, classical education, even when they made their greatest mark on American shores," says Samuel Moyn, Associate Professor of History at Columbia University. "No one today has the learning—Jewish or general—to compete." Bernstein-Nahar agrees. "One reason I don't think anybody's emerged is that we don't have an environment like Weimar Germany that produces people like Buber and Rosenzweig, who were really deeply conversant with Athens and Jerusalem," he says. "I think that's what it takes to produce an important Jewish philosopher. It was true in the case of Maimonides. It was true of Saadia Gaon. And it was true in the Golden Age of Spain."

Some, like Arnold Eisen, new Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary, argue that philosophy has always

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been somewhat alien to the Jewish temperament. “The kind of systematic theology we associate with Rosenzweig or Maimonides was always relatively scarce in Jewish thought. In addition, the reputation of philosophy itself is in decline right now, and hence the felt need to reconcile it with Judaism is less,” says Eisen, who views the present

Art Green names Jon Levenson and Michael Fishbane BJEEd’64 as two leading Jewish thinkers who combine their interests in Judaism and mythology, and address the human need to concretize religion in images, stories and motifs that pass through generations.



as a very fertile time for Jewish culture, Jewish schools and Jewish studies programs. “We see a lot of Jewish life, and less sustained Jewish reflection on that life.”

Finally, some scholars observe that a pronounced shift away from intellectual rigor and toward emotional and spiritual seeking has marginalized Jewish philosophy as an animating force in modern American Jewish life. Barry Mesch, Provost of Academic Programs at Hebrew College

and Stone/Teplow Families’ Professor of Jewish Thought, notes that when the American Jewish community shifted its focus away from the Holocaust and toward Jewish continuity in the 1990s, many Jews began to place a greater emphasis on spirituality and God-talk. “But this talking about God has less of an intellectual or rational focus,” he says, “and is more about the need to believe that there is a kind of coherence and transcendent meaning to one’s life.”

Samuel Moyn sees this as not just a Jewish trend, but an American one. “This has affected Judaism profoundly, but mainly insofar as it is a larger transformation in American culture,” he says. “The result is that Europe, which produced the greats of the past, has intellectuals but no religious mentors for the world, while America, which once eagerly received those greats, has religious observance but little interest in intellectualizing it.”

Part of what may limit the appeal of Jewish philosophy today is its tendency to be inaccessible. Jacob Meskin notes that few of America’s leading Jewish figures, such as Abraham Joshua Heschel and Elie Wiesel, have been philosophers. “No one knows what philosophers are talking about,” he says. “That sounds like a joke, but it isn’t totally a joke. I teach this kind of stuff all day and people’s eyes glaze over in about 15 seconds when I talk to them about philosophy. But when you talk the language of Heschel, a sort of spiritualized, psychologized version of Hasidism, that speaks to their condition a little better.”

GIANTS IN JEWISH THOUGHT

Making Judaism more accessible, relevant and alive for modern Jews is precisely the enterprise of today’s leading contemporary Jewish thinkers. While their primary work may not be philosophical in nature, today’s giants in Jewish thought are laying out avenues for its fullest spiritual and practical expression for Jews across the belief spectrum. Along with many other scholars interviewed for this article, Hebrew College Rabbinical School Dean Sharon Cohen Anisfeld declined to identify a standout contemporary Jewish philosopher, and instead named three major Jewish thinkers of our time: Arthur Green, David Hartman and Irving “Yitz” Greenberg. “They combine deep knowledge about the tradition with the capacity for translating its ideas into a language that resonates for contemporary Jews,” Anisfeld says. “And they blend brilliant thinking with a passion for communal life and institution building.”

For Barry Mesch, the choice of Art Green, Rector of Hebrew College’s Rabbinical School and Irving Brudnick Professor of Philosophy and Religion, is obvious. “I don’t know of anybody else who addresses fundamental Jewish theological issues of the day in ways that are more

compelling, sophisticated and accessible than Art does,” he says. Anisfeld notes that Green’s widely-read work, which draws on Hasidism and the Kabbalah, offers guidance for Jews in search of meaning and an intellectually sophisticated and modern approach to God.

David Hartman, founder of the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem, earned a PhD in philosophy and has published books on Maimonides and contemporary Jewish philosophy. But he is perhaps best known for advancing the notion that the establishment of the Jewish state in our time has created a new opportunity for the Jewish people to take responsibility from a position of power, rather than powerlessness, to shape a just society to live out the vision of the Torah. Maintaining a strong commitment to the halakhic framework, Hartman strives to frame halakhah in a way that is meaningful for contemporary Jews. “He and Yitz Greenberg are perhaps the two rabbis within the Orthodox world who have exerted the strongest influence outside that world,” says Art Green.

Green describes Greenberg, founding President of the National Center for Learning and Leadership, as one of the most powerful thinkers who has put forward a narrative of what Judaism has to teach about the affirmation and sanctification of life. “He’s grappled very deeply with the theological impact of the Shoah, but came out with a profound reaffirmation of the Jewish message of choosing life, the responsibility to protect the world and the enduring partnership/covenant between Jews and God,” says Green. “He also has been courageous in crossing boundaries, opening up conversations across Jewish denominational lines and between Jews and Christians.”

Green lauds two other leading Jewish thinkers who combine their interests in Judaism and mythology, and address the human need to concretize religion in images, stories and motifs that pass through the generations: Jon Levenson, Professor of Jewish Studies at Harvard, and Michael Fishbane BEd’64, Professor of Jewish Studies at the University of Chicago. As Green sees it, Levenson, a contemporary biblical theologian, has given us a reading of the Bible that is about profound spiritual and intellectual issues of land, life and death that still resonate today. And Fishbane probes a mythic core of Judaism that goes back through the Bible to the ancient Near East and continues to survive into a much more inner Judaism. “That mythic core has a power and a value that is not tampered with lightly and may still speak to contemporary Jews,” Green says. “Powerful symbols like blood, sacrifice, death, rebirth, land and Torah take on different forms or ‘garments’ as Judaism develops, while retaining the mythic power that lies in their antiquity and constancy.”

In addition to offering large numbers of Jews an accessible path to a more meaningful Jewish way of life,

many of the leading Jewish thinkers of our time are challenging the status quo. In many instances, they are exhorting Jews to live up to Judaism’s ethical demands and, when necessary, to revise their understanding and application of the tradition. “A great philosopher or artist in her or his relations with self, world and spirit includes support, encouragement and affirmation of where we are presently, who we are and have been,” says Steve Copeland, “but is dialectically very undermining as well; she gives us something we didn’t expect. The prophet Jeremiah gets arrested because the truths he’s saying are uncomfortable to hear. Kafka says a good book strikes us more like an ax striking the ice that surrounds us—us, unawares.”

Case in point for Copeland is Yeshaiyahu Leibowitz, an Israeli social critic who issued what some view as dramatically prophetic polemics until his death in 1994. While affirming halakhah and significant elements of the Zionist project, Leibowitz, immediately upon the victory of the Six-Day War, insisted that it would necessarily turn the country into an oppressive and dehumanizing security state. “He enraged his ‘fellow’ Zionist Orthodox Jews in

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Art Green, David Hartman and Irving “Yitz” Greenberg “combine deep knowledge about the tradition with the capacity for translating its ideas into a language that resonates for contemporary Jews,” says Sharon Cohen Anisfeld.



At Hebrew College, two programs speak directly to would-be Jewish philosophers: the Open Bet Midrash and Me'ah.



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declaring that the holy land of Israel is not holy; indeed, that Panama is no less, no more holy than Israel,” Copeland recalls. “Wherever you were on the spectrum of religious understanding and practice, you were surprised by Professor Leibowitz; he got you thinking.”

According to Nehemia Polen, Professor of Jewish Thought at Hebrew College, some of the most notable thinkers challenging the Jewish status quo in the past 30 years have been Jewish women such as Tamar Ross, Professor of Jewish Philosophy at Bar Ilan University, and Aviva Gottlieb Zornberg, a prolific author and Jewish biblical scholar. “Both speak with deepest integrity from the resources of the Jewish tradition and are also critically influenced by the Western intellectual tradition, and have found a voice to speak powerfully to Jews on how to conceive of Judaism moving forward,” says Polen. “Both are women rooted in the Orthodox community. And both have found a different voice that’s fresh and in creative tension with traditional models. New leadership typically comes with exactly that portfolio.”

As Polen sees it, Ross advances the notion that commitment to halakhah and the rabbinic legal tradition does not imply any version of it as final, and Zornberg shows that there’s a subversive but instructive power to the Bible. “Zornberg demonstrates how rootedness in the tradition and willingness to be unafraid and to face the primary sources anew unleashes tremendous power and energy, and even the dark side, which ultimately can be integrated as a positive force,” Polen explains. “Her analysis enables us to retrieve the Bible as a living and powerful document with a more complex message for modern Jews.”

JEWISH PHILOSOPHY FOR THE REST OF US

While today’s giants in Jewish thought may be reaching many Jews, they’re not reaching everyone. Especially those seeking not only to know what Jewish tradition has to say about life’s big questions, but also to evaluate the truth of the tradition’s claims in the light of Western philosophical inquiry. Given the apparent dearth of great Jewish philosophers in our time, what does today’s Jewish community offer Jews who seek to formulate their own Jewish philosophy—rooted in both Jewish sources and universal Western sources?

One avenue may be found in today’s thriving adult Jewish education scene, an outgrowth of Rosenzweig’s *Lehrhaus*. Contemporary institutions that take an open-minded, Western intellectual approach to Jewish learning include Hebrew College’s own Me’ah and Me’ah Graduate Institute; Melton; *Lehrhaus Judaica* in California; *Limud* in England; *Paidea* in Europe; and *Pardes* in Israel. “I would suggest that ‘philosophical’ or Greek questions about the justification of our claims for the Torah, the ‘chosen people’ status, rabbinic authority, the morality of gender roles and attitudes toward non-Jews in the sources recur in these spaces, whether our leaders are able to address them or not,” says Bernstein-Nahar.

At Hebrew College, two programs speak directly to would-be Jewish philosophers: the Open Bet Midrash and Me’ah. Part of a growing Bet Midrash movement in the U.S. and abroad, the Open Bet Midrash combines the best of the Western university and rabbinic study hall. Open Bet Midrash integrates *havruta* study (primary source study in pairs or small groups) with seminar-style discussions informed by traditional and critical scholarship. In Me’ah, students commit 100 hours to studying core Jewish texts and the evolution of Jewish culture and civilization in an atmosphere of open critical inquiry.

As Hebrew College President David Gordis sees it, in order to become a creative presence in Jewish thought, one has to begin by being grounded in Jewish civilization—a core mission of Hebrew College. “If we are successful in opening this book of Jewish culture and civilization, especially to the large majority of Jews who have been removed from Jewish life and are high achievers in other fields, and we can engage them with this experience,” says Gordis, “then we can hope to generate the kind of creative and cutting-edge thinking and leadership that the community needs in order to move ahead.” **HCT**

Preserving God's House

JEWISH ECOLOGICAL WISDOM FOR EVERYONE

Melting ice shelves in Antarctica, devastating hurricanes and wildfires in the U.S. and other recent climactic upheavals around the world have intensified concerns about how our way of life impacts the planet. While science may help diagnose the link between our fossil fuel dependent lifestyle and global climate change, and engineers may propose technological solutions, religion can transform how we relate to the Earth on a more holistic level. And Judaism, with its notion of *tikun olam*, has much to say about how we can literally repair the world.



Ellen Bernstein MAJS'06 has championed that message since the 1980s. Bernstein founded Shomrei Adamah (Keepers of the Earth), the first organization dedicated to promoting the ecological ideas and practices inherent in Judaism, and has authored several books on the subject, including *Ecology and the Jewish Spirit* (Pelican Publishing Company, 2000) and *The Splendor of Creation: A Biblical Ecology* (The Pilgrim Press, 2005). This spring Bernstein will teach a new course at HC—*The Place of Nature in the Bible*—to explore the spiritual and ethical issues surrounding our relationship to the natural world. In the following essay, she envisions how we can tap into the ecological wisdom of the tradition to do our part in building a more sustainable future. —MD

In December 2004, Adam Werbach, an environmental prodigy and former president of the Sierra Club at age 23, shook the environmental movement when he pronounced that environmentalism was dead. What Adam meant by “the death of environmentalism” was the end of environment as a “special interest,” distinct from, and often at odds with, other special interests. Instead, he believed environment must be at the heart of a broad liberal agenda.

Gratified by Adam’s analysis, I could see how my own path reflected the “death of environmentalism.” As a youth, I strongly identified as an environmentalist. Like others of my generation who embraced that perspective, I abandoned a conventional urban lifestyle and took to the woods and wilderness preservation. But the problem with a wilderness-centric environmental strategy is that it can lead to feelings of superiority and isolation, a wilderness-good versus city-bad mentality and a sense of environment as “special interest.” I recognized by the time I turned 30 that my singular focus on wilderness was unhealthy.

When I moved to Philadelphia, I realized I did not need to run to wilderness to find paradise; it was at home alive in my back yard—in the Wissahickon River, in my neighborhood and in the garden I would plant there. Within a few years of founding Shomrei Adamah, the first Jewish environmental organization, I had stopped thinking of myself as an environmentalist. Not only did the word “environment” feel flat and lifeless to me, but I was uncomfortable with the “us versus them” dichotomy that I felt the language of “environmentalist” conveys.

The language of “ecology” more accurately conveyed my sensibilities. Ecology literally means the study of the *ecos*, the house, and all of the connections and relationships and processes of those that share the house. The house in this case is nature, God’s house; the house that humanity and plants and animals share in common.

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In the early years of Shomrei Adamah, I was just beginning to explore Judaism, and the Jewish ideas I was learning resonated deeply with the ecological ideas I already embraced. We Jews believe in ONE God and we share together in ONE earth. Either way you look at it, theologically or ecologically, we are all connected to one another and to all of nature and the earth's natural processes. And because we are inextricably bound, whatever actions we take, whatever thoughts we think yield consequences in the world. The Sh'ma—OUR God is One—the watchword of our faith—could just as well be the watchword for the discipline of Ecology. While God is the source of our lives spiritually, nature is the source of our lives in the material plane, and being mindful of the godliness in everything is the first step of a spiritually-oriented ecological lifestyle.

Jewish institutions need to undergo a process of institutional change from the inside out so as to rise to the challenge of this ecological age.

Through my studies, I recognized that Judaism is necessarily an ecological, sustainable tradition. Both Judaism and ecology require a long-term vision, one concerned with insuring a future for generations to come. Simply put, you can't use up all your resources, wantonly pollute the earth or heat up the atmosphere, if you want to insure a future for your children. In fact, all traditions that rise up out of the land, all indigenous traditions like Judaism, seek to sustain a people into the future. And like ecology, whose concern first and foremost is the *ecos*, the house, Judaism places great emphasis on preserving the home—our earthly home. That's why we have laws that forbid the cutting down of fruit trees and the polluting of waterways, and edicts that describe where to locate tanneries and how to plan towns, and where to plant gardens and where to browse the sheep. Our whole system of social justice and *tzedakah* grew out of a landed consciousness and the custom of leaving the corners of the field for the poor.

It's not just Jewish ideas that are ecological; it's also the day-to-day lifestyle that an authentic Judaism cultivates. Not only how we spend our money, but also how we spend our time directly impacts the world we inhabit. Abraham Joshua Heschel observed that we moderns use time to exploit space; but an authentic Jewish life integrates a healthy respect for time. There's plenty of time for working and doing, but there are also times dedicated to appreciating and being. Without these "time outs," we become habituated to life's miracles and too often mindlessly exploit nature.

Instead, when we eat, we offer a blessing for our food, psychically returning our love back to the universe that supports us. Our holidays keep us tuned to the seasons and the phases of the moon, and our prayer cycle offers us opportunities every day to remind us of the source of our life and to sustain us through life's challenges. Shabbat, the centerpiece of a Jewish life, offers an entire day each week devoted to stopping, to rest. One day a week, we indulge ourselves in no-"thing"-ness and count our blessings, hoping they will keep us on the right path for another week.

Between *Shabbatot*, each of us can mindfully preserve the *ecos* in myriad ways. For instance, buying local produce from farmer's markets supports small farms and minimizes consumption of fossil fuels needed to transport food across long distances—and connects us to our neighbors and neighborhoods. Walking, rather than driving, yields many of the same benefits.

Just as individuals can embrace Jewish ecological values, so can Jewish institutions. But getting there will require systemic change. Quick environmental fixes and sound bites are not enough. Recycling is not enough. Charging an overtaxed social action committee to do an environmental project is not enough. Jewish institutions need to undergo a process of institutional change from the inside out so as to rise to the challenge of this ecological age. Boards need to change; the fundraising committees, sisterhoods and finance committees all need to see Jewish institutional life in the context of a long-term plan for sustainability.

I'm eager for synagogues and other Jewish institutions to feature locally grown or organic produce in their kitchens and cafeterias. And to re-examine all the systems of their buildings and their purchasing, so that they line up with ecological and Jewish values that abhor waste and encourage sustainability. Ideally, bar and bat mitzvahs, weddings and other Jewish *simchot* will soon come to reflect these values. I'd also love to see gardens grow up on the campuses of Jewish institutions, and Jews—young and old—tending them and communing in them. Such gardens could provide food for *tzedakah* and beauty for inspiration. And I look forward to a time in the near future when ecological perspectives will be blended seamlessly into Jewish school curricula and rabbinic education, and when synagogues and Jewish philanthropies will contribute significant *tzedakah* to sustainable causes.

Every challenge brings with it abundant opportunities. My prayer is for the Jewish community to rise to this occasion, and, as it does so, to be blessed—blessed with a more meaningful connection to nature, blessed with young people who will grow up with a passion to build a more sustainable world, and blessed by attracting (and retaining) Jews proud to be Jewish, proud that their Judaism speaks to the issues of this ecologic age. **HCT**

Seeing the Miraculous in the Mundane

FIRST ORAITA RETREAT DRAWS RABBIS FROM ACROSS THE U.S.

For seven hours each day during four days in October, 15 rabbis from all denominations from across the U.S. immersed in Jewish text study with three master teachers—Dr. Arthur Green, Rector of HC’s Rabbinical School, Dr. Melila Hellner-Eshed of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Devorah Zlochower, Rosh Beit Midrash of Drisha. Their topic was “Seeing the Miraculous in the Mundane: Hanukkah, Purim and the Human/Divine Partnership.” But the discussions and collegial sharing about miracles at the first retreat by HC’s Oraita Institute for Continuing Rabbinic Education went far beyond upcoming winter holidays.

After a guided hike through the New Hampshire woods surrounding the retreat center at Camp Yavneh, Rabbi Amita Jarmon of Adas Yeshurun Synagogue in Rockland, Maine, found parallels between layers in the forest landscape and layers of text: “When a guide shows you how he can tell that this side of the wall was cultivated land and that side was pasture, and that thousands of sheep were herded through here 200 years ago, or that this oak and this pine are linked by a mycorrhizal (underground fungal) network which is nourishing both of them, the beautiful forest becomes even more miraculous!” wrote Jarmon to her congregants after the retreat.

“Likewise, when you read a passage from the Zohar which comments on a verse from Exodus by making a playful reference to a passage from the Mishnah, and brings in references from Song of Songs and Isaiah, the vastness, complexity and interconnectedness of our textual heritage is experienced as mind-blowing and miraculous.”

Participants travelled from California, North Carolina, western Pennsylvania and from along the east coast, from Maine to Washington, D.C., to attend the retreat. They continued studying together through December via user-friendly online faculty lectures as well as *havruta* study and group discussions. Many rabbis were from smaller communities, where study opportunities are limited. “They were really hungry for this kind of learning,” says Rabbi Natan Margalit, Director of Oraita and Assistant Professor of Rabbinics.

Sharing lessons from texts, the rabbis also traded strategies for maintaining an awareness of the miracles in everyday practice—such as how to keep the experience of life-cycle events fresh and meaningful. “Officiating at a bar

or bat mitzvah can become routine. It’s easy to get worn down by it,” says Margalit. “They were looking for ways to be renewed.”

“I find myself speaking very enthusiastically about the retreat, am still thinking about it, really appreciated the cross-section of teachers,” wrote Rabbi Jonathan Kligler, Woodstock Jewish Congregation in Woodstock, N.Y. “I’m very glad I participated.”



Oraita continues on June 16–19, 2008, with two leading thinkers on Jewish mysticism, Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi (via video-conference) and Dr. Arthur Green, teaching together for a week of intensive study on “Judaism of the 21st Century: Paradigms and Practices for the Global Age” at the Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center in Falls Village, Conn. Faculty include Rabbi Tirzah Firestone and Rabbi Shaya Isenberg. Cosponsored by Oraita and the Isabella Freedman JRC, the program will offer two tracks—one for rabbis and one for rabbinical students. Oraita’s online component will enable the participating rabbis to continue studying after the retreat, through the end of July. Significant scholarships are available.

Support for Oraita has been made possible by Legacy Heritage Funds Limited and the Lasko Foundations. For more information, contact nmargalit@hebrewcollege.edu or 617-559-8617, or visit hebrewcollege.edu/oraita. **HCT**



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to the European front, where he served in Belgium, France and Germany for two years. He wrote home: "I want to express the sacrifice and toil of the soldiers, the suffering of the oppressed, the frightened eyes of children who are older than their years, the hysterical happiness of the liberated, the rebirth of hope amidst the smoldering ashes of today."

The horrors he witnessed in Europe haunted Jacobson when he returned, paralyzing his creativity. Unable to paint, he set up a studio in Brookline Village and taught painting for many years, communicating his ideas about art and color to others. Eventually he returned to portraiture and began to receive commissions to design synagogue interiors. In 1954, he created a mural for the new Hillel House at Boston University. His style stretched into new areas of abstraction, but somber themes from the war years still dominated his work.

A turning point came in 1956, when Jacobson visited his father, then living in Jerusalem. Nat Jacobson's visit to Israel was a revelation. For the first time since the war, he saw a vision of a bright future for the Jewish people. The Middle Eastern sunshine shattered his gloom and Jacobson came back from Israel a changed man. His paintings of Israel were bold, drenched with sunlight, blinding whites and daring colors. He later wrote, "Israel opened up ideas of color and light to me. There I found the extraordinary challenge of the brilliant light and how I could fit that into paint. My response to the light of Israel, and especially to

Above: "Shulamit, The Bride of The Song," silkscreen and paint on paper. Right: The artist with his 1954 mural at Boston University Hillel House.

the Negev, required a renovation of my palette. The light was abstract. The truth of it was the brilliance, and the fact that there was color only in the shadows."

Major exhibitions in Jerusalem, New York City and Boston followed. In 1958, he had solo shows at the DeCordova Museum in Lincoln, Massachusetts, and the Jewish Museum in New York City. Reviews of his exhibits were stellar. Dorothy Adlow reviewed the DeCordova exhibit for *The Christian Science Monitor*: "These pictures of Israel express almost spectacularly the painter's reaction to the country and the people.... Sometimes the colors run to a ravishing brilliance.... Here is a genuinely exalted communication."

In addition to canvases, Jacobson found new means of expression in other media, leaving a legacy throughout the Jewish community. A mural for Temple Israel in Great Neck, Long Island, depicts the patriarch Jacob drenched in light and dreaming of the promised blessings. Walls of stained glass at the Hebrew Rehabilitation Center for the Aged in Roslindale use chunks of colored glass embossed in light epoxy. A tapestry at Congregation Mishkan Tefila in Chestnut Hill greets the

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Faculty

Dr. Avi Bernstein-Nahar, Dean of Educational Planning and Development, represented Hebrew College at the Philosophy of Education Conference, Annual Conference of the International Philosophy of Education Society, in Atlanta, Ga., March 16–19, 2007. He co-organized a session on “Religion, Spirituality and Education,” and served as chair for a session on character education.

Dr. Steven Copeland, Adjunct Assistant Professor of Jewish Thought and Education, shared three evenings of textual encounter on the theme of “Disruption as a Way of Religious Learning: An Approach to Classical Jewish Text Study and Other Surprising Encounters” with congregants of Beth El in Sudbury, in January and February 2007. The first meeting explored “Becoming in the Divine Image via Torah Study,” the second, “Sources of Healing and the Reticent Movement in the Educator’s Religious Teaching,” and the third, “Responsibility Toward the Other in the Book of Ruth and its Midrashic Amplification.”

Dr. David M. Gordis, President of Hebrew College and Professor of Rabbinics, attended a meeting of the Chautauqua Abraham Advisory Committee of the Chautauqua Institution, N.Y., in January 2007. The following month, he participated in an American Jewish Committee Task Force on Jewish Peoplehood. He delivered the lecture “What’s Wrong with Religion, What’s Right: The Impact of Religion in the Contemporary World Viewed from Past History and Future Prognosis,” to Temple Torah of West Boynton Beach, Fla., and again at Temple Emeth, South Brookline, Mass. In April, he gave the closing lecture on the topic of “Religious Conviction in a Diverse World: Fundamentalism and



Arthur Green

Relativism,” at a conference sponsored by Boston University’s Institute for the Study of Economic Culture.

Dr. Arthur Green, Rector of the Rabbinical School of Hebrew College and Professor of Jewish Mysticism, delivered a paper entitled “What Heschel Learned from Hasidism,” at the Centenary Conference of Abraham Joshua Heschel at Brandeis University, on March 13, 2007. His essay “Intradivine Romance: The Song of Songs in the Zohar” appeared in *Scrolls of Love: Ruth and the Song of Songs* (Fordham University, 2006). In January, he taught at the New York Limmud Conference, and in February, he lectured at “A Day of Kabbalah” at the Jewish Community Center in Manhattan. Dr. Green was also a recipient of the 2007 Bureau of Jewish Education Keter Torah Awards celebrating outstanding achievements in Jewish education in Greater Boston.

Dr. Marion Gribetz, Associate Dean of the Shoolman Graduate School of Jewish Education, presented a paper in November 2006, at the Bureau of Jewish Education of Greater Boston Conference on Day School and Early Childhood Education. The paper was entitled “Israeli Art Masterpieces as Text: *Ahavat Yisrael*, *Yediat Haaretz* and

Some Good Old Questions about the Land, State and People of Israel.” In January 2007, she represented Hebrew College at the JEXNET conference (the network for Experiential Jewish Education) with two sessions on professional development for youth and informal Jewish educators. In February, Gribetz participated in the Mandel Jerusalem Fellows Colloquium and presented a paper (with Jan Darsa and Michael Myers) entitled “Teaching Jewish History, Identity and Ethics: A Model of Integration.”

Dr. Shirah W. Hecht, Visiting Lecturer in Education, presented “Pedagogy and Politics: Teaching Israel at North American Universities Today,” as a participant on a panel at the Association for Jewish Studies conference in San Diego in December 2006. In June 2007, Dr. Hecht presented two papers at the Network for Research in Jewish Education in Los Angeles, entitled “Whose Holocaust Is It? Preliminary Research on the Changing Context of Holocaust Education” and “Pedagogy of the Impressed: Conceptualizing Israel Impact for Teen Travel Programs.”

Shira Hecht



Dr. Joshua Jacobson, Visiting Professor of Jewish Music, is founding Director of the Zamir Chorale of Boston, artists-in-residence at HC and recipients of a major grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council in fall 2006. He published the article, “Victor Tunkel’s Music of the Hebrew Bible: The Western Ashkenazic Tradition,” in the fall 2006 *Journal of Synagogue Music*. That October, Dr. Jacobson delivered the guest lecture, “Defending Salamone Rossi: The Transformation and Justification of Jewish Music in Renaissance Italy,” at the Institute for Sacred Music Colloquium, Yale University, as well as the keynote address at the symposium on Jewish Music and Musicians at Creighton University, Omaha, Neb. Dr. Jacobson’s arrangements of “Chanukah Candle Blessings” and “Drey Dreydlikh” were performed by the Boston Pops Orchestra and the Tanglewood Festival Chorus in 13 different cities, and broadcast on CBS Channel 4 in December 2006.

In April 2007, Dr. Jacobson was scholar-in-residence at Temple Sinai, Summit, N.J. He spoke on “Symbolism and Meaning in the Early Art of Nathaniel Jacobson” on May 14, the opening night of an exhibition of his late father’s work at HC. On May 20–21, he lectured on “The Music of Zionism” at HC and presented “The Songs of Israel,” a lecture-recital with the Zamir Chorale. Dr. Jacobson conducted the Zamir



Joshua Jacobson

Chorale at Sanders Theatre, Cambridge, on June 3 in “*Shalom Rav*,” a program featuring Cantor Jeff Klepper and his ensemble, Kol B’Seder. On July 8, he conducted Zamir in the opening-night performance at the North American Jewish Choral Festival in Kerhonkson, N.Y. Later in July, Dr. Jacobson served as guest conductor and consultant at the Berkshire Institute for Music and Arts, and keynote speaker and teacher at Brandeis in the Berkshires.

Rabbi Jane Kanarek, Instructor in Rabbinics, presented at the Association for Jewish Studies Annual Conference in December 2006 a paper entitled “He Took the Knife: Biblical Narrative Becomes Rabbinic Law.” She was the scholar-in-residence at North Suburban Synagogue Beth El in Highland Park, Ill., during Shavuot.

Dr. Brian Mayer sang the leading male role in an original oratorio, *A Yiddische Miracle*, on May 13, at Temple Emanu-El in Providence, R.I. Cantor Mayer conceived, directed and produced the show in concert with CEP faculty Cantor Joseph Ness and Lynn Torgove. The production, for soloists, chamber orchestra, adult and teen choirs, featured Torgove, mezzo-soprano, in the lead female role. Cantor Ness, who orchestrated all of the music, conducted the ensembles

and sang a supporting male role. Featuring repertoire from the Yiddish theater, Yiddish folk and art songs, and classic *hazzanut* (cantorial pieces), the music is woven around an original script, written by Providence College Professor Raphael Shargel.

Dr. Nehemia Polen, Professor of Jewish Thought and Director of the Hasidic Text Institute, participated in a panel at the Association for Jewish Studies Annual Conference in San Diego, in December 2006, and presented “Jacob Joseph of Polonne’s Homiletic Works as a Repository of the Besht’s Teachings.” Also that month, he was a participant at the Institute for the Study of Rabbinic Thought Ninth Annual Conference, on Rabbinic Spirituality, Beit Morasha, Jerusalem. He presented “Intimate Argumentation: Torah and Spirituality in Early Rabbinic Judaism—An Analysis of *Yerushalmi Hagigah* 3:1.”

Dr. Polen taught on “Cultivating the Gaze and Sounds of Blessing” in January 2007, at the Institute for Jewish Spirituality, Cantorial Leadership Institute, Brandeis-Bardin Conference Center, California. In March, he presented a talk entitled “Doubly Displaced: The Hebrew Writings of Malkah Shapiro,” at the Literary Translation Seminar sponsored by the University Professors Program

Jane Kanarek

of Boston University. As Shabbaton scholar-in-residence at Temple Israel Center, White Plains, N.Y., April 20–22, Dr. Polen presented “Jewish Spirituality and the Challenge of our 24/7 World. Shabbat: Stop-Look-Listen.” On May 22–24, Dr. Polen was Shavuot scholar-in-residence at Congregation Kehilath Jacob (The Carlebach Shul), New York City, and presented “Teachings of the Baal Shem Tov on Psalms.” He served as scholar-in-residence and keynote speaker at the American Conference of Cantors (ACC) Annual Convention in Kerhonkson, N.Y., June 24–28, and spoke on “Sounds True: Finding Alignment in Inner Voice and Community.” At the Institute for Jewish Spirituality Cantorial Leadership Program at the Trinity Conference Center in West Cornwall, Conn., July 8–12, Dr. Polen presented “The Amidah and Standing Before God.”

Dr. Polen’s recent publications include “Night as Counter-Narrative: The Religious Background of Night,” in *Approaches to Teaching Wiesel’s Night*, edited by Alan Rosen [part of *Approaches to Teaching World Literature*, Joseph Gibaldi series editor] (The Modern Language Association of America, 2007); “Charismatic Leader, Charismatic Book: Rabbi Shneur Zalman’s *Tanya* and his Leadership,” in *Rabbinic and Lay Communal Authority*, edited by Suzanne Last Stone (Orthodox Forum/Yeshiva University Press, 2007); “Rebbetzins, Wonder-Children and the Emergence of the Dynastic Principle in Hasidism,” in *Shtetl: New Evaluations*, edited by Steven T. Katz (New York University Press, 2006); and “Dark Ladies and Redemptive Compassion: Ruth and the Messianic Lineage in Judaism,” in *Scrolls of Love: Ruth and the Song of Songs*, edited by Peter S. Hawkins and Lesleigh Cushing Stahlberg (Fordham University Press, 2006).

Yehudah Potok, Bet Midrash Instructor, Academic Director of

Prozdor and Assistant Director of Camp Yavneh, is now a member of the SHAS board of directors. His Jewish bioethics curriculum was recently published by the Institute for Informal Jewish Education at Brandeis University.

Susie Rodenstein, Adjunct Lecturer in Jewish Education and Lecturer in Early Childhood Education, shared her Hebrew College Online teaching experience at the Mandel Jerusalem Fellows 11th International Colloquium in February 2007, as a respondent to sessions on “Field Notes on Nurturing Israel Engagement” and “Ivrit L’Yaldei HaGan.” She also participated as a translator for the Bet Midrash on Megilat Esther and Bibliodrama.



Susie Rodenstein

Rabbi Peretz Rodman, Visiting Lecturer in Hebrew Language and Literature, spent most of the 2006–2007 academic year as rabbi and scholar-in-residence at the Dr. Miriam and Sheldon G. Adelson School in Las Vegas, the city’s first Jewish high school. While developing programs and assembling a faculty for Jewish studies and Hebrew language studies at the Adelson School, he also served as Head of Jewish Life for its associated elementary and middle school, the Milton I. Schwartz Hebrew Academy.

Rabbi Rodman contributed an article on Reuven Hammer, as well as translations from Hebrew of several articles by other authors, to the second edition of the *Encyclopedia Judaica*.

Rabbi Or N. Rose, Associate Dean and Director of Informal Education, The Rabbinical School of Hebrew College, organized and spoke or taught at several conferences over the past year, including “Spiritual Audacity and Social Justice: Abraham Joshua Heschel: A Centennial Celebration” on December 10, 2006; the winter seminar “People of the Book: An Introduction to Classical Jewish Texts” at ANTS from January 2–12, 2007; and “The Genocide in Darfur: A

Program for Religious Leaders” at Kehillath Israel, Brookline, on March 21, 2007. Rabbi Rose also served as a speaker and respondent for “Returning to God: An Interfaith Forum on Repentance and Reconciliation” at the First Church of Cambridge in March; as faculty at the Panim Inter-Seminary Retreat “Spirituality, Social Justice and the Rabbinate” at Camp Isabella Friedman, April 12–14; and as a panelist at the ANTS Convocation “Religion and Social Responsibility” on May 17.

His recent publications include “A Life in Search of Meaning: Heschel at 100,” *Forward*, January 4, 2007; “Divesting from Genocide: The American Jewish Community and the Genocide in Darfur,” *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, February 14, 2007; “Moses or Pharaoh: Fidelity Investments and the Genocide in Darfur,” *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, April 6, 2007; “Uplifting the Divine Attributes: Hillel Zeitlin’s Interpretation of Hasidism,” translation and introduction, *Zeek Magazine*, May 2007; and “Divine Garb: A Hasidic Commentary on the Revelation at Sinai,” *Tikkun Magazine*, May/June, 2007. He co-edited with his student Margie Klein RS’10 the anthology, *Righteous Indignation: A Jewish Call for Justice* (*Jewish Lights*, 2007). On November 9, 2006, Rabbi Rose became the father of two children, daughter Ma’ayan and son Aviv Rosenbaum.

Dr. Sol Schimmel, Professor of Jewish Education and Psychology, led text study sessions for faculty and staff at the Prozdor Retreat at Camp Yavneh in September 2006. The following October–November, he taught four classes for the Rabbinic Institute for rabbis from New England, sponsored by Hebrew College and the Synagogue Council of Massachusetts, and presented “On Using *Midrash Aggadah* to Teach Ethics” at the BJE Jewish Day School Educators Conference. In December, Dr. Schimmel presented the paper “Orthopraxy and Spirituality” at the Beit Morasha Conference on Rabbinic Spirituality, Jerusalem, and in January 2007, he presented “Why Do Bright, Educated Muslims Offer Specious Proofs for the Divine Authorship of the Qu’ran?” at the Conference on Scripture and Skepticism, University of California, Davis. From January–March, he taught four sessions of a course on “Judaism’s Attitudes Towards the ‘Other’” in Boca Raton, Fla. The Center for Inquiry conducted an interview with Dr. Schimmel on “The Psychology



Jonah Steinberg

of Islamic Fundamentalist Religious Belief” on February 2 (podcast available at pointofinquiry.org). In April, he presented the paper “The Emotions in Classical Jewish Sources: The Cases of Envy and Jealousy” at Brandeis University Philosophy of Education Seminar. As a lecturer for “Relationships through the Family Life Cycle,” a seminar series co-sponsored by HC and the Simmons School of Social Work, he presented “The Power of Repentance and Forgiveness” in May. Also that month, Dr. Schimmel was an invited participant in the conference “Visions of Peace and Reconciliation in Religious Traditions: Historical and Contemporary Patterns” at The Harvard Divinity School Center for Study of World Religions.

Dr. Scott Sokol, Dean of the Jewish Music Institute and Director of the Cantor Educator Program, was promoted to Professor of Jewish Music, Jewish Education and Psychology in October 2007, in recognition of his major contributions to the fields of Jewish special education, Jewish liturgical music and the cantorate, during more than a decade of service to Hebrew College.

Dr. David Starr, Dean of Me’ah and Assistant Professor of Jewish History, was on sabbatical in Israel for the spring 2007 semester. He gave the talk “Meah: Cultural Literacy in

Post-Canonical Age” at the Mandel Jerusalem Fellows Colloquium, “Challenges for Jewish Educational Leadership: Conversations on Vision for Practice,” in February 2007. On November 5, 2007, Dr. Starr presented “What is Most Important in Jewish Life? Judaism, Israel or the Jewish People” to the Hebrew College and Prozdor Alumni Association.

Dr. Jonah Steinberg, Associate Dean and Director of Academic Development and Advising for the Rabbinical School, has brought Open Bet Midrash programming to Temple Shir Tikvah, in Winchester, Mass.; to the National Havurah Committee Winter Retreat on Cape Cod; to the Limmud conference in Nottingham, England; and to the Charles River Bet Midrash, a new weekly program that alternates between Congregation Eitz Chayim in Cambridge and Congregation Kehillath Israel in Brookline. To date, the Charles River Bet Midrash has involved 112 participants in its weekly evenings of learning. Dr. Steinberg also recently served as scholar-in-residence at Congregation Shaare Zedek in New York City.

Lynn Torgove, Adjunct Instructor of Jewish Music for the Cantor-Educator Program, is the cantorial soloist at Temple Emanu-El, Marblehead, Mass. She has served as the alto soloist for both the Cantata Singers Ensemble

(Bach Cantata #134 and Bach's Mass in B Minor), conducted by David Hoose in November 2006, and the Zamir Chorale ("Judas Maccabeus," Handel), conducted by Dr. Joshua Jacobson in December 2006. As part of a Cantata Singers Chamber Series concert that December, Torgove premiered songs for solo voice and piano composed by Cantor Joseph Ness ("Wie Azoy" and "Linie Wie"). Also that month, she served as the soloist for the Nigun Chamber Ensemble, directed by Yelena Neplokhova, and the Hanukkah Concert at Temple Emanu-El, Providence, R.I., conducted by Cantor Brian Mayer.

In January 2007, Torgove was the Stage Director for *Don Pasquale* (Donizetti) at Opera Providence, and in April she was Stage Director for *The Barber of Seville* (Rossini) at Boston Lyric Opera/Opera New England. Also in April, she served as the soloist for the Yom HaShoah Commemoration Concert, Temple Israel, Natick ("Like Smoke Above the Wind," composed by Cantor Charles Osborne); the Young Cantors at the Old Vilna Shul Concert, Boston, conducted by Cantor

Joseph Ness; and in May for *A Yiddishe Miracle* at Temple Emanu-El, Providence, R.I., conducted by Cantor Joseph Ness. In August, Torgove participated in the Aston Magna 2007 Summer Festival as the Sorceress in the festival's performance of Henry Purcell's opera *Dido and Aeneas* at Bard College, Annandale-On-Hudson, N.Y., and Simon's Rock College, Great Barrington, Mass.

Alumni

Nancy Slotnick Aferiat P'84, Camp Yavneh, a professional dating coach and founder of Cablight.com, an internet-based company that counsels clients and helps them become more successful at dating, is the author of *Turn Your Cablight On: Get Your Dream Man in Six Months or Less* (Penguin).

Jules Becker BJE'd'69, MHL'78 received a Certificate from the Principal Center program in 1992. He is a theater critic for the *Jewish Advocate*, covers music and theater for *Hadassah Magazine*, and writes for the *South End News* and *New England Entertainment Digest*. He has taught students at several Prozdor branches.

Miriam Behar

(formerly Marian Cooper) P'54, class agent, and her husband, Joseph, recently appeared in the film *Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan*, starring Sacha Baron Cohen. She and her husband were filmed in their home in Newton, Mass., where they run a kosher bed-and-breakfast. They shared their experiences with

the Boston Chug Ivri, of which she is a member.

Rabbi Philip Berkowitz P'55, BJE'd'59, MHL'61, of Kennebunkport, Maine, was presented a Governor's Service Award by Gov. John Baldacci of Maine for serving as an inspiration for others for the greater good of their community. He was also elected a trustee of the Seashore Trolley Museum of Kennebunkport, the oldest and largest electric railway museum in the world.

Jeremy Eichler P'91 is classical music critic for the *Boston Globe*, where he writes feature stories and profiles on a regular basis. He has written about music for the *New York Times*, *Vanity Fair* and the *Washington Post*, as well as other publications.

Norman Finkelstein P'57, BJE'd'61, MAJS'86, Camp Yavneh, class agent, delivered the annual Bessie Weintraub Lecture, co-sponsored by the Jewish Publication Society and Chisuk Emuna Congregation on November 5, 2006, in Harrisburg, Pa. He was also the featured speaker for the Jewish Children's Book Writers' Conference at the 92nd Street Y in New York. His latest book is *The JPS Guide to American Jewish History*, targeted to lay adults. He notes that Hebrew College has been part of his life since he entered Prozdor as a student in 1957, and that this year marked his 25th consecutive year as a Prozdor teacher.

Heidi Smith Hyde Cert'01, Education Director at Temple Sinai in Brookline, has written the children's picture book *Mendel's Accordion* (KAR-BEN Publishing, 2007). An East European folk tale about the origins of Klezmer music, it provides a glimpse of the immigrant experience in America. Heidi has two sons, Andrew P'07 and Steven, a current Prozdor student.

Lynn Torgove





Jill Jacobs

Rabbi Jill Jacobs P'91, Director of Education at Jewish Funds for Justice, was selected to be one of the *Forward's* "List of Fifty American Jews Who Have Made a Difference in the Past Year." The organization, Jewish Funds for Justice, gives grants to groups in low income areas and deals with issues of domestic poverty. Three years ago, Jacobs presented the Conservative Movement's Committee on Jewish Law and Standards with a *teshuvah*, a rabbinic opinion calling for Jewish business owners to give workers a living wage and, when possible, to hire union employees. A 1997 graduate of Columbia University, she was ordained at the Jewish Theological Seminary in 2003. She is a third generation Hebrew College graduate; other members of her family include her grandfather, Dr. Leo Tarutz P'31, BJE'd'35, ז"ל, her mother, Paula Jacobs P'64, BJE'd'68, and her aunts, Judy Tarutz Wolff P'69 and Donna Tarutz P'71, BJE'd'75. She recently married Guy Izhak Austrian of New York City.

Dr. Anne Lapidus Lerner P'59, BJE'd'62, MHL'64, *Camp Yavneh*, is Director and founder of the Jewish Women's Studies Program, Director of the Jewish Feminist Research Group, and Assistant Professor of Jewish Literature at the Jewish Theological Seminary. Her book *Eternally Eve: Images of Eve in the Hebrew Bible, Midrash, and Modern Jewish Poetry* was published in 2007 by the Brandeis University Press Series on Jewish Women.

Paul Singer P'48, BJE'd'52, class agent, is the author of *Pursued by a Bear, or How I Endured Years of Medical Treatment and Lived to Write About It* (iUniverse, February 2007).

Miriam Kandler Sokoloff P'63, BJE'd'67, of Brookline, Mass., a quilter, teaches quilting and sewing classes at Brookline Adult Education. Her quilts are known for their Judaic designs based on Israeli postage stamps, and were displayed at the Spellman Museum of Stamps and Postal History at Regis College in Weston, Mass., as part of the exhibit *Quilts and Stamps: Art by Design*. Seven of Miriam's Hanukkah and Israeli-themed quilts were on display at the New England Quilt Museum in Lowell as part of the city's Destination World exhibit. She attended her 40th Hebrew College reunion this past June.

In Memoriam

Dr. Melvin A. Golden P'53 BJE'd'57, of Lubbock, Texas, died November 13, 2007. A graduate of the University of Vermont School of Medicine in 1964, he earned his BJE from Hebrew College, along with his bachelor's degree in biology from Boston University. He completed his residency in radiology at the Ichilov Hospital in Tel Aviv, then settled in Lubbock and began a private practice in radiology. Later he worked at veterans' hospitals around the U.S., serving at the VA Hospital in West Roxbury, in spring 2007. He leaves his companion, Carolie Mullan of Lubbock; his children, Yifat Schulsinger and her husband, Alan, of Brooklyn, N.Y., Avi Golden of Queens, N.Y., and Sima C. Golden of Baltimore; siblings Miriam Bloomfield and her husband, Irving, of Chestnut Hill, and Hadassah Mendelsohn of Framingham; and four grandchildren. He treasured the Hebrew College family and enjoyed his class reunions in 2003 and in June 2007, where he delivered in Hebrew

a memorial tribute to his classmate Dr. Gerald Perlow. The family requests that remembrances be made to Hebrew College or the Amyloidosis Research Foundation.

Dr. Gerald Perlow P'53, BJE'd'57, of Swampscott, Mass., died April 28, 2007. A clinical cardiologist, he was a 1963 graduate of Tufts University School of Medicine in 1963. He earned his undergraduate degree from Harvard College in 1959 and was an alumnus of Boston Latin School. Chief of Cardiology at North Shore Medical Center in Lynn, he was a clinical instructor at Tufts-New England Medical Center in Boston and had a private practice. A class agent and board member at Hebrew College, he was president of the Jewish Journal of the North Shore. He leaves his wife, Carolyn; his three sons, Michael P'88 and his wife Lori of Cherry Hill, N.J., Adam of Philadelphia, and Joshua of Boston; and one grandson, Max Perlow. He was the brother of the late Sidney Perlow BJE'd'52.

On April 7, 2007, the Hebrew College community mourned the death of **A. Leon Goldman**, beloved husband of Marilyn Goldman. Together with Marilyn, Leon was an active participant in the life of Hebrew College and a warm presence who was much beloved by the College community. A graduate of George Washington Law School in 1940, he practiced law in Washington, D.C., and New York for 48 years, including a partnership with his late brother, Henry. He was President of the Cayuga County Bar Association, and a member and past President of Congregation B'nai Israel and B'nai Brith. The funeral was held in Syracuse, New York, on April 11. He is survived by Marilyn, his wife of 61 years, and children Vivan Schaar; Stanley, Harry and Gerry Goldman; and seven grandchildren. The family notes that contributions may be made to Hebrew College.

Gribetz

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understands the Jewish educational enterprise, speaks the same language as Jewish education experts at Hebrew College (many of its staff have links to Hebrew College), presents interns with a wide range of Jewish educational possibilities and supports the professional growth of all staff members as Jewish educators.

By developing a network of select laboratory schools, Gribetz seeks to nurture professional relationships that will increase job opportunities for Hebrew College graduates.

Gribetz stresses that a network of select laboratory schools, such as Keshet, is needed to help students make the most of their fieldwork experiences. “It’s not enough to send someone out on an internship and say that the institution will take care of you,” she maintains. “The internship will give students more experience, but may not necessarily frame that experience as an integral part of their training and professional growth.” By developing this network, she also seeks to nurture professional relationships that will increase opportunities for Hebrew College graduates to obtain jobs and build their careers at participating schools.

To foster a professional culture for Jewish educators both on and off-campus, Gribetz spends each workday advancing multiple projects on multiple fronts. While devising ways to attract new students to meet the needs of the Jewish community, she also explores opportunities to enrich the professional lives of more experienced Jewish educators. As she strives to leverage the College’s intellectual and administrative resources to develop the most effective professional development programs, she also tries to target educational offerings to specific audiences. “I come to work plotting ahead to do all these things,” says Gribetz with a smile. “Day by day, I feel like I’m solving a huge 3-D jigsaw puzzle. You have to keep all the pieces in place at one time, and you may not see how until you get three steps down the road.”

But this is precisely the kind of puzzle that Gribetz relishes—one whose solution is as promising and transformational as it is complex. “Hebrew College is poised to make great inroads locally and nationally in the professional Jewish world,” she says. “We have the brainpower to create programs that can really make a difference.” **HCT**

Hebrew College Celebrates 82nd Commencement

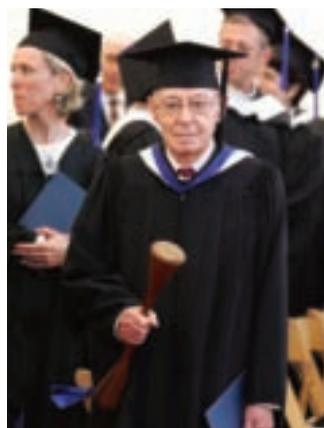
June 3, 2007

On Sunday, June 3, Hebrew College honored the accomplishments of the largest graduating classes in the College’s history—42 recipients of master’s degrees and certificates, including the first graduates of the Cantor-Educator Program (CEP); 173 Prozdor graduates; and 198 Me’ah graduates in Boston. An additional 169 Me’ah graduates in Greater New York celebrated their academic milestone at ceremonies at Central Synagogue in Manhattan on June 24. (See p. 48).

Ruth Messinger, President of The American Jewish World Service and a longtime advocate for social justice, delivered the commencement address. “We live in a time of severe poverty and obscene wealth,” Messinger told the graduates. “But this is also a time when real change is possible. We need you to create a global, activist, social justice Judaism for the 21st century.”



The honorees (L to R): President Gordis, Rabbi Jeffrey Summit, Enid Shapiro, Ruth Messinger, Reverend Nick Carter, Mimi Alperin, Richard Pzena, Dr. Gilda Oran, Jonathan Golden, Board Chair Ted Cutler.



Grand Marshal Nathan Aronson *BJEd’37*.



President David M. Gordis.

Hebrew College Celebrates 82nd Commencement

June 3, 2007



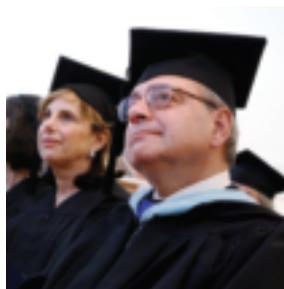
Members of the Hebrew College Class of 2007 (L to R): Anita Zetlan Redner, Eileen Susan Schongold, Katherine C. Haspel, Michael David McCloskey, Lisa Sheiman, David P. Miller, Leslie B. Hamilton Penn, Steven Arnold Bleier, Sarra Allegra Spierer, Andrea Rose Cheatham Kasper, Sara Sinai, Jennifer L. Antebi, Elizabeth Rachel Corman, Andrew Bernard Doxer, Susan Shemin, Louise Egbert Treitman, Rachel Golan Chafetz, Yehudit Judith Kayla Robinson, Natalie A. Simon and Lisa Michal Landis. (Not shown: Shulamit Badoush, Suellen Beiser, Carmit Burstyn, Daniel F. Burstyn, Adina Farkash Cohen, Sarah Ellen del Castillo, Refael Fadlon, Rachel N. Ganz, Stephanie Meira Hoffman, Mohammad Khalil Husein, Rene Wyrobnik Isser, Nancy E. Kaplan, Sigalit Meir, Shana Onigman, Rachel E. Reef-Simpson, Sonia Rice, Joshua M. D. Segal, Ravit Shalit, Shifra G. Sheinfeld, Jennifer Lynn Truboff, Yael Waxman and Chasida Zilbiger.)



Honorary degree recipient Ruth Messinger.



Board of Trustees Chair Ted Cutler.



Grand Marshal and class agent Norman Finkelstein
P'57, BJEd'61, MAJS'86.

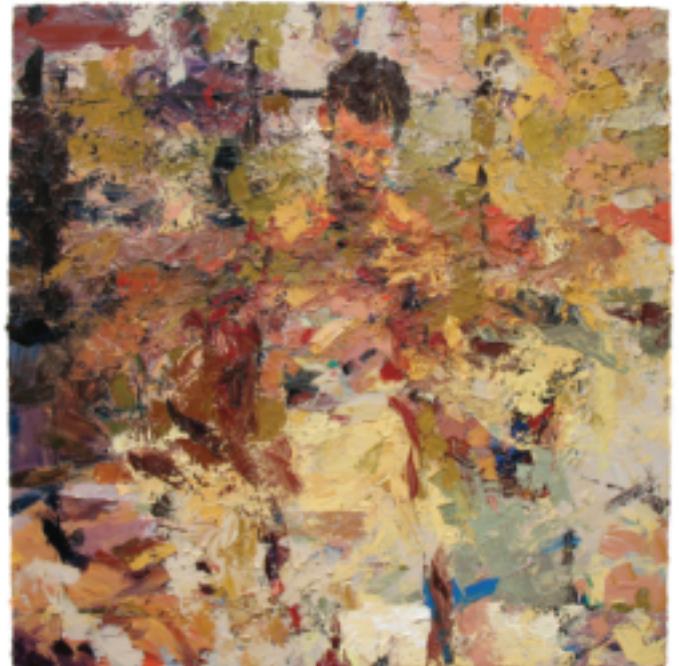


Valedictorian Anita Zetlan Redner
MJEd'07.

Artist Joshua Meyer presents "Seek"

GIFT HONORS VISION OF PRESIDENT GORDIS

In October 2007, artist Joshua Meyer presented his oil-on-canvas painting "Seek" to Hebrew College to honor the vision of Dr. David M. Gordis, who ends his 15 years as President in June 2008. Forty of Meyer's paintings were shown at Hebrew College in a 2004 exhibit entitled *Tohu vaVohu*.



"Seek," by Joshua Meyer, 2006, oil on canvas, 36 x 36 inches.

"Commanding visions," emerge from the midst of Meyer's thickly layered paint, according to Dr. Steve Copeland, Adjunct Assistant Professor of Jewish Thought. "This young master-artist engages fateful questions concerning the character of art and of Judaism, their possibilities, challenges and problems." Meyer's art, concludes Copeland, "can seize and change us."

Describing his paintings, Meyer says, "Chaos is desperately searching for form. The image veers between the two extremes, courting incoherence. The colors and marks struggle with each other in a quest for clarity and meaning." Former Creative Director at HC, Meyer now devotes himself full-time to painting in his Cambridge studio. His works are represented by galleries in Boston, Atlanta, Los Angeles and London. **HCT**

Jacobson

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visitor with a beautifully lettered *shalom* set in a vivid prism of colors representing a rainbow. In the years that followed, Jacobson continued to paint, mostly his vision of Israel's deserts from his frequent visits, with occasional commissions for portraits and synagogue art.



By the late 1960s, his ongoing interest in color theory propelled him in new directions that impacted the world of art. He created teaching materials that simplified and clarified the explanation of color theory, culminating in his textbook *The Sense of Color* (1975), frequently used in middle and high school classrooms. He also created a palette of pigments—chosen according to colors that optimize the ability of the artist to navigate through color space on a visually rational path, rather than traditional colors. This became the basis for an innovative line of artist pigments, *Modular Colors*, produced in 1971 by the firm Binney and Smith (makers of Crayola Crayons).



Tapestry, c. 1990.

In the late 1980s, Jacobson became a research affiliate at the MIT Media Laboratory, where he worked on computer modeling of color combinations. With MIT Professor Walter Bender, he co-authored several articles, including the seminal “Color as a Determined Communication,” published in *IBM Systems Journal*. According to Bender, “Nat spent his career uncovering and refining the definite rules of color. I helped him represent these rules on the computer, so it could be played (and taught) like music.”

In his last years, even as cancer was slowing him down, Jacobson was able to continue creating art, using computers at the MIT Media Lab. The optimism that had blossomed during his adventures in Israel still filled his life and his canvases. Shortly before his death, he told an interviewer, “I try to find a life-giving possibility; whether I’m doing the blue flower in a thistle or Noah’s rainbow, there is a force that comes through.” **HCT**

Hebrew College Celebrates 82nd Commencement

June 3, 2007



173 students graduated from Hebrew College’s Prozdor High School.



Sarra Allegra Spierer CEP’07, MJE’d’07 teaches at the College’s first ordination ceremony for the Cantor-Educator Program.



CEP faculty member Brian Mayer, Adjunct Associate Professor of Jewish Music, shares the joy of graduation with a student.



Growing Me’ah in Greater New York (L to R): Honoree Mimi Alperin Me’ah’03, New York Regional Director Moshe Margolin, honoree Richard Pzena Me’ah’04.



Provost Barry Mesch (L) hands a diploma to David P. Miller MAJS’07 of Zurich, Switzerland, who completed his master’s degree through Hebrew College Online.

Hebrew College Celebrates 82nd Commencement

June 3, 2007



Prozdor Class of '57. Front row (L to R): Helaine Saperstein, Phyllis Miller, Fran Pechenick. Back row: Naomi Samber, Edward Shoening, class agent and Grand Marshal Norman Finkelstein, and Joel Goldberg.



Dr. Melvin Golden, z'l, HC'57. (Not shown from HC Class of '57: Abe and Sonya Schickler.)



Marvin Levine HC'82.



Hebrew College Class of '67. Front row (L to R): Phyllis Hurwitz Goldman, Judith Kline Rhein, Carol Weinstock Shapiro. Back row: Beverly Hoffman Singer, Dr. Paul Menitoff, Miriam Kandler Sokoloff. (Not shown: Morris Robinson.)

Korman

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“Our hope is that the Jewish Special Education Program will branch out and become a research and training center for Jewish special needs education at Hebrew College,” says Korman, also speaking on behalf of his wife, Evelyn. Ultimately, Hebrew College President David Gordis predicts, Korman’s donation will firmly establish the College as the preeminent center of Jewish special education.

“We saw the unmet need for Jewish special educators and decided that Hebrew College was in the best position to fill it. We’re impressed with the College’s capabilities and strong leadership.”

For Korman, this work has been a family affair. He credits his daughter—the teacher who prepared the man with autism for his bar mitzvah 20 years ago—with opening his eyes to the urgent need for Jewish special educators. When Paula Korman MAJS’93 completed her master’s degree in Jewish Studies at Hebrew College, she graduated with the College’s first concentration in Jewish Special Education. With help from her teacher-mentor Rose Bronstein P’41, BJE’d’45, MHL’70, she had developed the concentration in order to blend her master’s studies with her bachelor’s degree in social work. Paula’s trail-blazing concentration laid the groundwork for the College’s Jewish Special Education program, where she now works as a Learning Specialist.

“Not only did Paula stimulate the program in the College, she stimulated my thinking, as well,” says Korman, who took note when his daughter received the College’s Sidney Hillson Memorial Award in 2005 for her achievements in Jewish education. “Evelyn and I saw the unmet need for Jewish special educators and decided that Hebrew College was in the best position to fill it. We’re impressed with the College’s capabilities and strong leadership.”

Korman, who is Chair of the Board of Trustees of Philadelphia Health Care Trust—a private healthcare foundation supporting healthcare research, delivery and education—has shown leadership throughout his career. He started out as a practicing healthcare attorney and in 1968 founded American Medicorp, one of the nation’s first public hospital-management companies. After a long tenure as President and CEO of MEDIQ

Korman

continued from page 44

Incorporated, a health services company, he now serves on the board of directors of several public companies. He was also Chair of the Board of the automotive retailer The Pep Boys and of PCI Services, a pharmaceutical packaging services company.

Along with his wife, Korman has a long track record as a philanthropist. The couple supports various healthcare and educational institutions, including the University of Pennsylvania, where Bernard Korman received both his bachelor's degree in economics and his law degree. At Hebrew College, the Kormans have also contributed to the Rose Bronstein Fellowship for promising Jewish educators. "Philanthropy is social responsibility; I can't paint with a broader brush than that," says Korman. "Those who have been fortunate have a responsibility to share that with society."

The philanthropist's latest gift will secure not only Hebrew College's leadership in Jewish special education, but also will help make Greater Boston a center for Jewish special needs, says Sokol. Thanks to recent developments, area families with special needs can now access several local resources. These include Gateways, a merger of the Jewish Special Education Collaborative, which enables students with special educational needs to attend and succeed in a day school environment, and Etgar L'Noar, which provides a Jewish education to children with moderate to severe disabilities; the Bureau of Jewish Education of Greater Boston, which has appointed a director dedicated to Jewish special education; and Prozdor, the College's high school program, which now mainstreams about 70 students with special needs.

In addition, Hebrew College and Gateways have partnered to prepare youth with disabilities for bar or bat mitzvah—a profound milestone for the teens and their families. Prozdor trains high school seniors to work with children with special needs, and places student volunteers at Gateways.

Finally, through its Jewish Special Education Program, the College "is raising the awareness of rabbis, cantors and Jewish educators about special needs," says Sokol, who expects the endowed professorship in Jewish Special Education to advance this outreach and consciousness-raising. "The Korman gift will help establish an educational path for those who want to be *shelihim* (emissaries) to the Jewish community about this urgent matter." **HCT**

Hebrew College Celebrates 82nd Commencement

June 3, 2007



Prozdor Class of '67. First row (L to R): Aryeh Cheses, Rhoda Kline Bress Gilroy, Rabbi Cheryl Weiner, Margie Glazer, Edward Fistel. Second row: Gloria Srebro Dagan, class agent Herbert Levine, Jeanie Aronson. Third row: Barry Spillberg, Nancy Hill Kaftan, Joan Richmond Zidon, Marshall Fritz, Steve Gray. Fourth row: Alan Harris, Josh Shapiro, Steve Baritz. (Not shown: Marsha Chaskelson, Elaine Furman Gashin, Ralph Halpern, Charlotte Kaplan, Rise Andler Liskov, Elaine Stoler Stein.)



Prozdor Class of '67 (L to R): Sharon Dudar Cohn, Lois Isaacson Kaplan, Nancy Gordon Katz.

Stand With Hebrew College

November 27, 2007

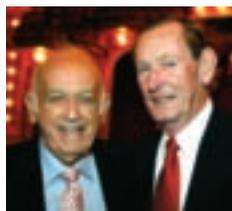
Hebrew College honored donors to the special major gifts campaign "Stand With Hebrew College," on the stage of the Cutler Majestic Theater in Boston. The event included presentations by President Gordis, Vice Chair Mark Atkins P'65, and Board Chair Ted Cutler, as well as a performance by third-year rabbinical student Minna Bromberg and the premiere of a new video about HC, *Join the Dialogue*. Download the video at hebrewcollege.edu.



The view from Tremont Street.



(L to R) Board Chair Ted Cutler, Joan Cutler and Robert Cutler.



Trustee Mickey Cail Me'ah'03, and Andrew Petitti.



David Begelfer Me'ah'01, and Bette Ann Libby Me'ah'01.



Board Vice Chair Mark Atkins (third from left) with (L to R) Prozdor junior Allison Poirier, first year CEP student Jessica Kate Meyer, MJLS student Joel Baron Me'ah'06, Andrew Doxer MEd'07, Cert'07, and fifth year rabbinical student Chaim Koritzinsky. The HC students and alumni were featured in the video *Join the Dialogue*, premiered at the event.



Elyse and Trustee Howard Rubin.



Trustee Beth and Michael Moskowitz.

Stand with Hebrew College

This past year, Hebrew College made a special major gifts appeal to donors as the College restructured to strengthen its financial base. We are grateful to the following donors who answered our call to "Stand with Hebrew College."

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 Stephanie and James Sokolove
 Marjorie Tichnor Me'ah'04
 Eileen and A. Raymond Tye
 Nicole Zatlun and Jason L. Weiner Me'ah'96

The Fund for Hebrew College

The Fund for Hebrew College was established in 2001 as the principal source of revenue for the College's capital, operational and strategic planning initiatives. Through the extraordinary generosity of the individuals, foundations and corporations listed below, the College today provides unparalleled educational opportunities for students of every age and background, whose common goal is Jewish renewal.

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Stand With Hebrew College

November 27, 2007



Third-year
 rabbinical student
 Minna Bromberg.



(L to R) Rabbinical School
 Rector Dr. Arthur Green,
 President Gordis and Trustee
 Ted Teplow.



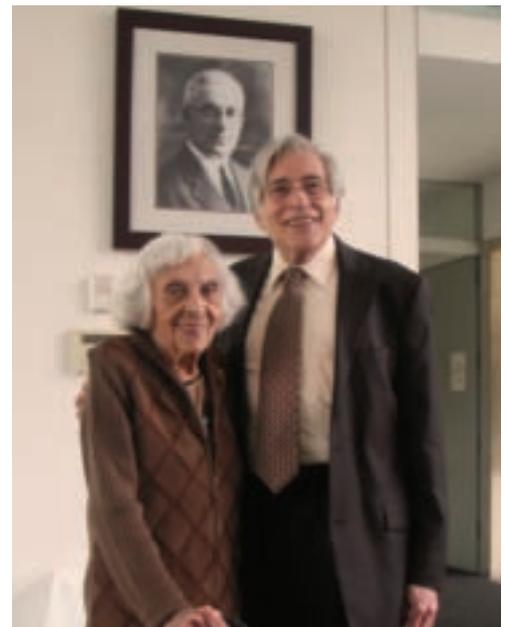
Mark and Joyce
 Goldweitz.



Beverly Bavly and
 Mickey Cail.

**Dean Louis Hurwich
 Portrait Dedication**

October 1, 2007



Under the leadership of Louis Hurwich, z'l, founder and Dean of Hebrew College from 1932-1947, Hebrew College became a model of the Hebraist approach to Jewish education. A portrait of Hurwich was dedicated during Sukkot in memory of his daughter, Rhoda Hurwich Kane P'44. Pictured here, event chair Celia Goldman Lyons P'37, HC'41 with President Gordis.

First New York Region Me'ah Graduation

June 24, 2007

At New York City's Central Synagogue, 169 Me'ah graduates from the New York metropolitan region were the first to celebrate their accomplishments at a formal Hebrew College graduation ceremony. Dr. Arthur Green, Rector of HC's Rabbinical School, led a study session. Me'ah alumni Mimi Alperin Me'ah'03 and Rich Pzena Me'ah'04, who have been instrumental in expanding Me'ah's reach in Greater New York and New Jersey, received honorary degrees.



New York Regional Director Moshe Margolin addresses the graduating class in Central Synagogue's historic main sanctuary.



(L to R): Dr. Samuel C. Klagsbrun, Hebrew College-Me'ah Advisory Committee; Nichole Lehman and Richard Nackenson, members of the 2006-2007 Hebrew College Forum.



Me'ah faculty Tammy Jacobowitz (R) with members of her graduating class from Congregation Sons of Israel, Briarcliff Manor, N.Y.

The Fund for Hebrew College

continued

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Hebrew College Annual Giving

President's Circle amenities are available to all donors who have made a minimum gift of \$1,800. in Fiscal Year 2007 (July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007).

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Marjorie Tichnor Me'ah'04

\$50,000 to \$99,999

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First New York Region Me'ah Graduation

June 24, 2007



Timothy Rucinski Me'ah'07, site liaison for the Kane Street Synagogue, Brooklyn, N.Y., and Me'ah Advisory Committee member, addresses the graduation lunch.



Keynote presenter Dr. Arthur Green, Rector of HC's Rabbinical School, leads a text study session.

Hebrew College Honors Mickey Cail

November 19, 2006

Family and friends gathered on November 19 to celebrate the placement of the portrait of Mickey Cail in honor of his distinguished service as Chair of the Hebrew College Board of Trustees (2000–2006).



L to R: Mickey Cail, Max Greenbaum, Burt Silverman and Marilyn Mades.



L to R: Laura Silin, Mickey Cail, Jenna Kaplan and Ted Raphael.

David Starr Addresses Alumni Association

November 5, 2007

Following up on his spring sabbatical in Israel, Dr. David B. Starr, Assistant Professor of Jewish History and Dean of Me'ah, discussed "What is Most Important in Jewish Life? Judaism, Israel or the Jewish People? Thoughts from Jerusalem and Boston." The lecture was made possible through the generosity of Dr. Leo BJE'd'61 and Lorraine Arnfeld, in memory of the Arnfeld, Kipnis, Small and Zibula Families; and Gerald and Debra Bickoff, in honor of Esther and David Kampler and in memory of Marcia and Charles Bickoff.



(L to R): Nina Arnfeld P'84, Gerald Bickoff, Debra Bickoff.



David Starr, Ellen Harder Me'ah'04, Edward M. Bloom Me'ah'04.



David Starr.



Anne Lowenthal Me'ah'04.



Paul Gilman P'58, David Starr, Robert Feingold P'58.

Hebrew College Annual Giving

continued

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Rae and Joseph Gann Portrait Dedication

November 11, 2007

When Rae and Joseph Gann, z'l, decided to help build the new library at HC's Newton Centre campus, Rae commented, "The library is the heart of any academic institution, and this is why my husband and I chose to make this our gift to Hebrew College." To honor the Ganns' memory, a portrait of the couple by artist Warren Proserpi was dedicated in the lobby of the Gann Library.



The portrait of Joseph and Rae Gann by artist Warren Proserpi.



Rabbi Samuel Chiel.



Donald Bavly and Mickey Cail.



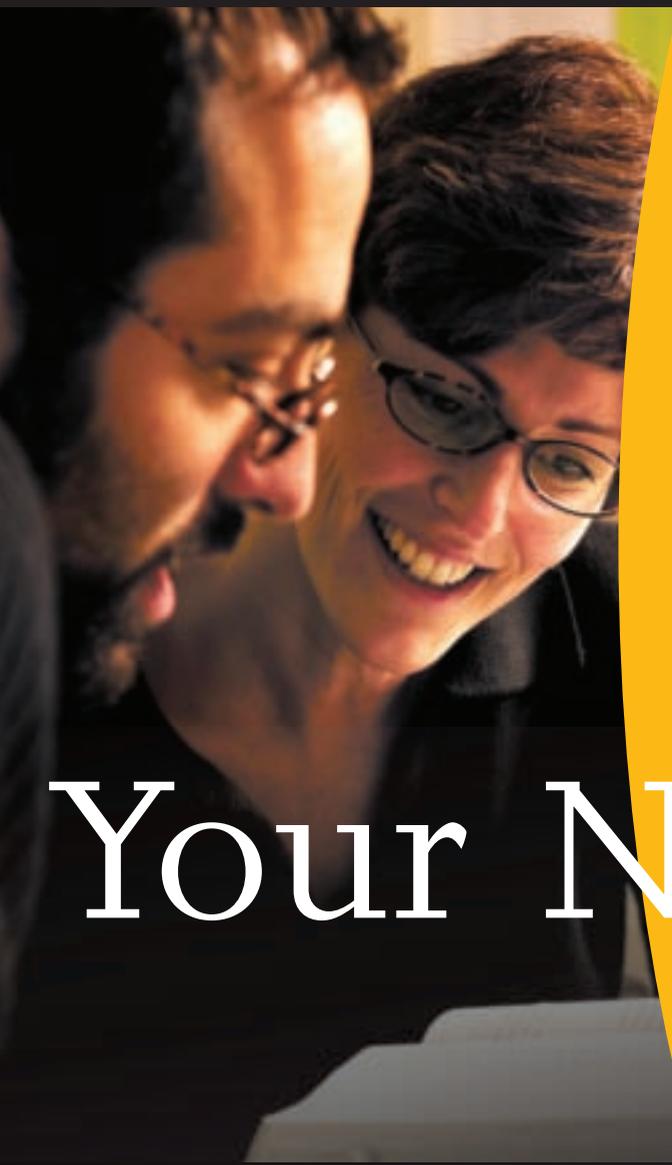
Miriam and Eric Bavly.



Joan and Ted Cutler, HC Board Chair.



(L to R): Mickey Cail, Warren and Lucia Proserpi, Beverly Bavly, Felice and President David Gordis.



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