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One of the key passages in the Torah is found in Deuteronomy 6:18. There it states, “And you shall do that which is right and good in the eyes of God.” The great medieval sage Nachmanides, in commenting upon this passage, states that the Torah includes this overarching principle precisely because no code of law – no matter how detailed – could possibly assign rules to cover every situation that life presents. Therefore, this principle is meant to guide humanity – Jews and Gentiles alike – towards the goal to which all our commandments direct us – “to do that which is right and good in the eyes of God.”

Of course, precisely how one identifies that which is “right and good” is often difficult. There is no magical formula that can absolutely assure us in each and every instance what the “path of the righteous” is or ought to be. Yet, as Jews who are heirs to a millennial-old interpretative tradition, we understand, in the words of Abraham Joshua Heschel, that God is constantly “in search” of men and women – of us – to engage in this quest as active partners with the Holy One. God calls upon us to sanctify life, however uncertain our efforts may often be. HUC-JIR does all in its power, as this issue of The Chronicle testifies, to educate klei kodesh (holy vessels) who will share the insights provided by our Massorah (our Tradition and its teachings) with those whose lives they will touch.
Rabbi Mark Miller, a newly ordained rabbi from our Los Angeles campus who has recently been appointed to serve a Union for Reform Judaism congregation in Houston, has underscored these points in his discerning article, “Is God Holy?” I am particularly proud of this article because it displays the type of education we offer at the College-Institute, and indicates how our teachers and students seek to fulfill their mission of serving as marbitzei Torah (teachers of Torah). Writing under the direction and with the encouragement of Professor Tamara Cohn Eskenazi, Rabbi Miller first presented this paper at the Western Regional Meeting of the Society for Biblical Literature. This work is the product of an educational setting that affirms that modern scholarship is not opposed to the religious insights that can be garnered from Jewish tradition and texts. Instead, such scholarship enhances the meanings that flow from our Jewish heritage. This method allows Rabbi Miller to provide us – his readers, his students, and his dialogue partners – with understandings that can guide us as we strive to discover religious meanings and fulfill moral obligations – “to do that which is right and good in the eyes of God” – in our own lives.

Indeed, the article by Leah Kaplan Robbins that highlights the contributions that our professors at the College-Institute have made to the new Encyclopaedia Judaica proudly features our commitment to this approach. The spiritual insights such an approach yields is clearly revealed in the compelling and insightful message Rabbi Miller delivers. He points out that the Prophets teach that God is not holy apart from the people Israel. Building upon an academic analysis of different biblical texts, Rabbi Miller then quotes the words of Hosea, “B’kir’vcha kadosh – in your presence, I God am holy,” and concludes “that holiness is not an inherent state for God. Instead, when we join together with God in partnership, our connection creates holiness.”

Descriptions of the “holiness that emanates from connection” are described in many ways throughout the pages of this publication. Our teacher Rabbi Mark Washofsky pays tribute to Rabbi Solomon Freehof and indicates how we can usefully employ Halakhah, the legal pathways in which Jews have walked for millennia, as we seek to create just and meaningful lives. The other articles in this issue seek to present the many ways in which persons and events at the College-Institute contribute to the realization of this goal.

Jean Bloch Rosensaft describes the “Journeys of Remembrance and Renewal” that our Chancellor Alfred Gottschalk took to his native Germany and China. His narratives provide us with instruction and inspiration, as does the Address delivered by retired Israeli Supreme Court Justice Aharon Barak at our Jerusalem Ordination Exercises last year.

The many intersections between the teachings of Jewish tradition and the applications that flow from such teachings are a crucial part of our formal and informal curricula at the College-Institute, and Rachel Litcofsky offers a description of what is transpiring in this arena at HUC-JIR in her lead piece, “Leadership through Social Responsibility.” The role that the College-Institute plays in providing a venue for the intellectual consideration of these issues can be viewed in the summary that Dr. Steven Windmueler provides of an academic symposium held at our Los Angeles campus, “Are Jews Still Liberal?” The importance of the military chaplaincy as a career path for our graduates also is given central attention in this issue of The Chronicle.

Changes on the modern American Jewish scene have provided novel challenges to inherited patterns of the past, and adaptation as well as preservation is necessary if Judaism is to remain both authentic and relevant in the present setting. In the area of worship, the symposium “Reclaiming American Judaism’s Lost Legacy: The Art of Synagogue Music,” held on our New York campus this past November, presents the insights and reflection of a distinguished array of panelists – including the former Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary, Dr. Ismar Schorsch – on this vital topic. Finally, selections from new books by Professor Gary Zola of Cincinnati on informal education and camping and by Professor William Cutter of Los Angeles on Judaism and health complete this issue, one in which we hopefully indicate the manifold ways in which College-Institute attempts to address the many needs of Judaism and humanity by sanctifying life and by striving to do that “which is right and good.” May you enjoy the pages of this Chronicle and may this summer be one of renewal and fulfillment for you and your loved ones.

Rabbi David Ellenson
June 2007 Sivan 5767

HUC-JIR does all in its power to educate k’lei kodesh (holy vessels) who will share the insights provided by our Massoret (our Tradition and its teachings) with those whose lives they will touch.
Rachel Litcofsky

An integral part of our students' lives during their tenure at the College-Institute is the way in which they express the shared Jewish value of tikun olam, repairing the world. Through gemilut chasadim – acts of loving kindness, and their pursuit of tzedek – justice, our students have taken on a variety of leadership roles within the realm of social action and social justice.

Students have participated in various social justice/action projects, including raising awareness about the genocide in Darfur, fund raising for tzedakah programs, running a weekly soup kitchen, addressing the root causes of social injustices through broad-based community organizing, and traveling to other countries with peers from other seminaries to help residents of impoverished communities.

Recently, the Rabbi Jerome K. Davidson Chair in Social Responsibility was established to strengthen HUC-JIR's core curricular commitment to training Jewish professionals with a foundation in this area. For over a decade, Rabbi Davidson and Albert Vorspan, Vice President Emeritus of the Union for Reform Judaism, have jointly taught students in New York about the importance of social responsibility within congregational life. They have helped hundreds of students prepare for the realities they will one day face as religious and professional leaders through their team-taught elective course, Tough Choices, Social Action in the Community.

This fall, they will teach the course Rabbinic Leadership and Social Responsibility, a requirement for all fourth-year rabbinical students. Similar programs are offered at the other campuses, including a course this past spring on Economic Justice, which brought together students from HUC-JIR and the University of Judaism, with business leaders in the Los Angeles community. (The next issue of the Chronicle will feature an in-depth view of the social responsibility track of the core curriculum at HUC-JIR.)

Rabbi David Ellenson, Terry Rosenberg, a member of the Board of Governors, and eight HUC-JIR rabbinical students joined seventeen rabbinical students from other seminaries and American Jewish World Service president Ruth Messinger for a ten-day mission to El Salvador. The delegation lived in the rural village of Cuidad Romero with host families, tilled the fields, worshipped and studied Jewish texts, reflected on issues of faith and identity, and discussed how these experiences would strengthen their life-long dedication to social justice as future leaders of the Jewish people.

Upon her return, Rosenberg shared her experiences with students and board members. She reflected that "it was in the afterglow of such an experience, that I face my biggest challenge, a moment of choice, as it were. How do I honor my experience as my life returns to its usual hectic, consuming pace and the visceral experience of El Salvador fades to black? What is the extent of my Jewish moral obligation outside the bounds of the Jewish and American communities?"

(For more information on AJWS missions, visit www.ajws.org.)

Carrie Frank, a rabbinical student who is also pursuing a degree in Jewish Education, and Rogerio Cukierman, a student at the School of Jewish Communal Service, found their calling to social action this year as the organizers of several school-sponsored social action/justice programs involving the entire Los Angeles campus community of students, faculty, and staff. They created an ongoing recycling program, a mitzvah project that fostered a partnership with the Leo Baeck Temple, and a tzedakah opportunity that centered around the March Madness basketball tournament.

Each Monday at the New York campus, students have the opportunity to cultivate leadership skills and build relationships within the New York community through the student-run soup kitchen (www.huc.edu/read/soupkitchen). They work side by side with religious school student volunteers and local community members to provide meals, clothing, and conversation to local New Yorkers who are unable to provide for themselves.

The soup kitchen is just one such program where students have taken the initiative to reach out to the greater community in need. Erica Greenbaum, recently ordained in New York, has been a Kavod Tzedakah Fellow (www.kavod.org) for the past four years. Kavod is a tzedakah collective that was created by Rabbi Josh Zweiback ’98 when he was a student. The mission of Kavod is to encourage rabbinical students to gain experience in the challenges and rewards of raising funds and distributing tzedakah. Since her first year as a fellow, Erica has individually raised over $25,000.

Students in Israel for their first year of studies at HUC-JIR find diverse ways to become involved within the community in and around Jerusalem. The Year-In-Israel Program provides a long list of organizations where volunteers are truly needed and where students can help throughout the year. This year, students worked with the Ethiopian-Jewish immigrant community in Mevasseret Zion or accompanied the elderly who work on producing crafts for sale in their gift shop at Yad LaKashish (LifeLine for the Old) (www.lifeline.org.il) in Jerusalem.

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1 HUC-JIR rabbinical student Beth Kalisch and Ari Weiss, a student at Yeshivat Chovevei Torah in New York City, working together as part of the the American Jewish World Service rabbinical student delegation to El Salvador.

2 Rabbi David Ellenson and Ruth Messinger, AJWS President, tilling the fields alongside students on their recent trip to El Salvador.

3 Together in El Salvador: (from left) AJWS Board member William P. Becker, Rabbi Ellenson, Michael Rosenberg, HUC-JIR Governor Terry Rosenberg, AJWS President Ruth Messinger, and Chencho, Director of the Foundation for Self-Sufficiency in Central America.

4 HUC-JIR students and PANIM Founder and President Rabbi Sidney Schwarz (left) at the recent Social Action retreat.

5 Students at HUC-JIR/Los Angeles clean up the beach for Heal the Bay, as part of the School of Jewish Communal Service’s Kadima program, to encourage social action.

6 Rachel Isaacson, MAJE, MAICS ’07, led team Emunah, a group of 15 HUC-JIR students and friends, in the Breast Cancer 3-Day Walk in San Diego.
Our students also forge their own service-oriented paths. Diana Fersko, a first-year rabbinical student, found a way to foster change by becoming active in K.E.E.P. (Kehilat Kol HaNeshama English Experience Program) (www.kolhaneshama.org.il/). The program aims to provide English language enrichment and support to disadvantaged children from diverse social, religious, and economic backgrounds in Jerusalem. Diana found that working with this population taught her a great deal about the creativity, flexibility, and determination needed to be an effective teacher and mentor. It is through this community-based service program that she has gained invaluable experience that will strengthen her future work in informal education.

The College-Institute encourages students to build relationships with other seminarians, community leaders, and organizations within and beyond the Jewish community to address the root causes of social injustice. Many students have joined the Jewish Fund for Justice (www.jfjustice.org) to receive training in the arts of Community-Based Congregational Organizing. They have developed the skills to build relationships with others, discovered shared stories, and marshalled power within a diverse community in order to effect real change. Students have used these skills in their pulpit internships to change the ways in which congregations talk about social justice, and to develop strategies for how, as Jewish leaders, they will engage others in the public arena. Others have worked with organizers in some of the leading broad-based organizations, including One LA and Manhattan Together. This work is supported by an initiative of the Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) and Just Congregations (www.urj.org/justcongregations), founded by Rabbi Jonah Pesner.

Second-career students bring prior work and life experience to their social justice work. Rachel Timoner, a rabbinical student at HUC-JIR/Los Angeles, had a full-time career in social justice before rabbinical school. Through the economic justice work she did this past year, she was able to envision how she would incorporate economic justice organizing into her rabbinate, through strategies that engage and empower congregants to select issues and campaigns on which to take action collectively, and by using the bima as a platform to inspire others to get involved.

Rachel Isaacson, who recently received a joint Masters in Jewish Education and Jewish Communal Service, served as the team captain for fifteen HUC-JIR students and friends in the Breast Cancer 3-Day Walk in San Diego this November (www.th3day.org). Together they walked 60 miles with thousands of others to promote breast cancer awareness and research. They called their team Emunah (faith) because they believe in a world without breast cancer, and collectively raised over $40,600.

The Union for Reform Judaism (www.urj.org) enables HUC-JIR students to connect with high school and college students across the country in a variety of social justice programs. Melissa Simon, a rabbinical student at HUC-JIR/Cincinnati, has spent the past two summers working with both the NFTY (North American Federation of Temple Youth) Bay Area Mitzvah Corps, and the ‘Summer JAM’ (Judaism, Activism and Mitzvah work) run by PANIM (www.panim.org), the Institute for Jewish Leaders for Values. Melissa found that both of these experiences helped her transmit her enthusiasm for social justice and Judaism to the next generation of Jewish leaders.

This past April, Owen Gottlieb, a second-year rabbinical student at HUC-JIR/New York, attended an interdenominational PANIM retreat with other seminarians to learn how he could integrate the ideals of social justice into his rabbinate. Owen credits the retreat as an effective forum on community organizing, spirituality, and social justice that opened up meaningful dialogues with other seminarians.

Students are applying what they learn about social responsibility in the classroom into action through these myriad activities, as well as in their student pulpits and internships. The relationships and experiences they build upon now will provide them with the necessary knowledge and skills to help shape the communities they will serve in the future.
When the publishers of the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (EJ) convened to work on a second edition in June 2006, they called upon forty-two scholars on the HUC-JIR faculty and staff to contribute their expertise to the endeavor. More than 180 separate entries were composed by HUC-JIR scholars specifically for the new edition, known as the *EJ2*, and countless other entries, reprised from the first *Encyclopaedia*, are now canonized in the revised work.

The faculty’s contributions are encyclopedic in their breadth, covering topics from Bible, Talmud, Kabbalah, and Modern Jewish Thought to Poetry and Dance, and including areas of inquiry that were absent from the first edition.

Dr. David Sperling, Professor of Bible at HUC-JIR/New York, was approached by the *EJ2*’s editor, Michael Berenbaum, to head the Bible Division. In addition to writing and updating nearly 150 articles, Sperling selected and edited the work of all of the project’s Bible contributors (including many of his colleagues at the College-Institute), all of whom he hand-picked for their demonstrated expertise in their fields.

The opportunity to take a leadership role in this project was not only a crowning achievement in his academic career, but resonated deeply with Sperling on a personal level; the editor of the first edition was H.L. Ginsberg, his first serious Bible teacher and mentor.

“I feel as if this role is an inheritance,” he says.

Sperling suggests that the *EJ* that he inherited is in many ways dramatically different from the new edition that he helped to produce. Though his predecessor shared his dedication to excellence and use of experts from diverse fields and backgrounds (both editions rely upon scholars from all of the Jewish movements as well as Christian theologians), the new volumes reflect more than thirty years of scholarship, social change, and evolution of Jewish thought since the originals were published in 1971-72.

Sperling explains that the study of Bible, in particular, underwent dramatic change soon after the first *EJ* was published, after the Six-Day War in 1967, when the Israelis came into control of what had been biblical Israel, the West Bank. The major archaeological discoveries of this period provided some of the first concrete evidence for Biblical events. Scholars working today have access not only to biblical sites in Israel, but also to texts of ancient translations of the Bible and the text of the Dead Sea Scrolls, taking their work to levels of authenticity and depth unimaginable at the printing of the first edition.

The *EJ2* also benefits from a dramatic change in the perception of biblical criticism, which in the original “was viewed with a certain coolness… a hesitancy about applying the same kind of rigor to the study of bible than to say the study of Talmud.” Sperling says that “it is the only subject singled out in the first edition as something that we have to treat gingerly.” He acknowledges that Jews are much more comfortable with biblical criticism today, a change he attributes to the rise and success of the State of Israel, which made Jews “more confident and willing to examine our text more critically.”

“When the first *EJ* came out, post-modernism was in its infancy and we had vastly different ways of reading things – we now take the same book but look at different questions about it; scholars trained now will be asking different kinds of questions from the ones that I was asked,” he says.

Several HUC-JIR scholars penned articles that were motivated by such changes. Dr. Alyssa Gray, Associate Professor of Codes and Responsa Literature at HUC-JIR/NY, says that her goal in updating two articles for the new edition (“Amoraim” and “Johanan Ben Nappaha”) was to incorporate “a shift in the scholarly approach to using rabbinic literature as a historical source that has developed over the last 30 years or so. Most scholars today understand rabbinic literature to be an ideological and literary construction that enables us to see what religious, legal, and ideological agendas the Rabbis had and how these developed. Unlike earlier scholars,” she says, “we no longer feel confident that we can use rabbinic literature to derive ‘real’ biographical or historical data about the rabbis – they were producing religious law and narrative, not history.”

Perhaps the most profound change evident in the *EJ2* is a newfound recognition of gender issues. Several HUC-JIR professors were asked to revise first-edition articles with an eye to women and gender.

Dvora Weisberg, Associate Professor of Rabbinics and Director of the Beit Midrash at HUC-JIR/LA, explains that her addition to the entry “Aggadah,” “is an acknowledgement that the first *EJ* did not recognize gender as a lens that illuminated the study of rabbinics (in fact, the previous edition did not include any discussion of women in *aggadah*).” Sharon Koren, Assistant Professor of Jewish History at HUC-JIR/NY and an expert on Jewish mysticism and gender studies, updated the entry “Shekhinah” – the dwelling or settling place of God (also thought of today as God’s feminine pres-

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ence), because “the previous article on the Shekinah did not discuss sexual symbolism.” She notes that “the revised edition is sensitive to all matters of gender.”

Others were asked to contribute articles on topics that were excluded entirely from the previous edition. Wendy Zierler, Assistant Professor of Feminist Studies and Modern Jewish Literature at HUC-JIR/New York, wrote entries on Letty Cottin Pogrebin, the American feminist/ writer, and Jo Sinclair (Ruth Seid), who wrote the first Jewish lesbian novel. She feels that inclusion of these topics “represents a newfound interest in feminist studies, women writers, and gay/lesbian issues.” Carole Balin, Professor of Jewish History at HUC-JIR/NY, introduced the EJ readership to Miriam Markel-Mosessohn, “who is perhaps the first women in Jewish history to be considered a maskilah. The designation maskil (enlightened one) had been reserved for men, as conventionally the Haskalah (Jewish Enlightenment movement) was regarded as an exclusively-male enterprise.” Balin points out that Markel-Mosessohn was intensely involved in the Haskalah in Eastern Europe. “Her exclusion from the original edition serves to highlight the gendered nature of the Haskalah and of Jewish history at the time.”

Rabbi David Ellenson summarizes the currents of change in his entry, “American Rabbinical Training,” which describes developments in modern rabbinical seminary education during the last thirty years. He wrote the piece on the heels of a major comparative monograph that he wrote years ago on the development of the modern seminary in Germany during the 19th century, and based on the historical and institutional perspective granted by his current position as the leader of HUC-JIR, the nation’s oldest institution of higher Jewish education.

Ellenson explains that “the scholarship by HUC-JIR faculty in the EJ2 displays the affinity that exists between the modern temperament and the Reform Movement. Indeed, there is an absolute compatibility between the critical spirit of modern scholarship and the spiritual directions that inform the Reform Movement and our institution as a whole.”

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**HUC-JIR scholars, past and present, and their contributions**

- **Divisional Editor, Bible**
  - **S. David Sperling** Ph.D., Rabbi, Professor of Bible, HUC-JIR/New York: Abraham; Adrammelech; Akhenaton; Amalekites; Araham; Ashima; Bet-Rehob; Bible; Book of the Covenant; Canaan, Curse of; Chronicles, Book of; Crowns; Decorative Headdress, and Wreaths; Day of Atonement; Deuteronomy; Dinah; Ecstasy; Ehrlich, Arnold Bogumi; Eliah; Elisha; Enoch; Ephod; Ethbaal; Eunuch; Eve; Ewald, Heinrich Georg August; Exodus, Book of; Fire; Flesh; Flood; The; Frankfort, Henri; Gad; Garden of Eden; Genesis, Book of; Gershon, Gershonites; Gershon, Gershmu; Gevritz, Stanley; Ginsberg, Harold Louis; God, Names of; Goliat; Gordis, Robert; Greenberg, Moshe; Gressmann, Hugo; Habakkuk; Hadas; Hagai; Haggai; Halle, William; Ham; Halman; Hanan, Menahem; Hazael; Held, Moshe; Hengstenberg, Ernst Wilhelm; Hezekiah; Historiography; History: Beginning Until the Monarchy; History: Kingdoms of Judah and Israel; Hittites; Hoelscher, Gustav; Holiness Code; Horse; Hoshea; Huldah; Hunting; Hupfeld, Hermann Christian Karl; Hur; Hyksos; Idolatry; Ili; Ken, Karl David; Isaac; Jabin; Jacob Ben Hayyim ben Isaac Ibn Adonijael; Jaen; Jair; Javan; Jealousy; Jебusite; Jеhoahaz; Jehoiahad; Jehoiakim; Jehoiarib; Jeremiah; Jeroboam; Jeroboam II; Jesse; Jethro; Jezabel; Jirku, Anton; Jobb; Joash; Jochebed; Joel; Jonah, Book of; Jonathan; Jonathan Ben Uzziel; Joshua; Joshua, Book of; Josiah; Judges, The Book of; Kaufman, Yehezkel; Kenite; Ketarah; King, Kingship; Kings, Book of; Kittel, Rudolf; Korah; Leprosy; Levine, Baruch; Leviticus, Book of; Lewy, Julius; Lion; Malachi, Book of; Malamont, Abraham; Manasseh; Marti, Karl; Mazar, Benjamin; Medes and Media; Micah; Miriam; Moloch, Cult of; Moses; Mowinckel, Sigmund Olaf Plytt; Nahum; Nehushtan; Obadiah, Book of; Patriarchs, The; Philistines; Phoenixia; Phoenicians; Prophets and Prophecy; Rabsaris and Rab-Mag; Rab-Shakeh; Red Heifer; Rephaim; Rezin; Ruth, Book of; Samuel; Sarah; Sama, Nahum M.; Sinai, Mount; Solomon; Song of Songs; Ugarkit; Worship; Zechariah; Zephaniah

- **Carole B. Balin** Ph.D., Associate Professor of History, HUC-JIR/New York: Dubnow-Erlich, Sophia; Markel-Mosessohn, Miriam


- **Herbert Chanan Brichto**, Ph.D., Rabbi: Professor of Bible, HUC-JIR/Cincinnati: Blasphemy; Blessing and Cursing; Priestly Blessing

- **Stanley F. Chyet**, Ph.D., Rabbi: Professor of American Jewish History, HUC-JIR/Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion; Henry, Jacob; Jonas, Joseph; Lopez, Aaron; Marx, Alexander; Rivera, Jacob Rodriguez; Trade and Commerce

- **Martin A. Cohen**, Ph.D., Rabbi: Professor of Jewish History, HUC-JIR/New York: Canavajal; Coimbra; Dais, Luis; Este, João
entries to the first and second* editions of the Encyclopaedia Judaica.

Richard Hirsch, Ph.D.; Rabbi; HUC-JIR/Jerusalem: Eisenstein, Ira; Israel, State of: Religious Life and Communities; Reconstructionism; Rosenstock-Huessy, Eugen

Barry Kogan*, Ph.D.; Efroymson Professor of Philosophy and Jewish Religious Thought, HUC-JIR/Cincinnati: Cause and Effect

Sharon Faye Koren*, Ph.D.; Assistant Professor of Medieval Jewish Culture, HUC-JIR/New York: Shekhinah

Jonathan Krasner*, Ph.D.; Professor, HUC-JIR/New York: Gamoran, Marnie Goldsmith

Leonard S. Kravitz, Ph.D., Rabbi; Professor of Midrash and Homiletics, HUC-JIR/New York: Contributor to unsigned entries

Frederic Krome*, Ph.D.; Managing Editor, The American Jewish Archives Journal and Academic Associate of the Marcus Center, American Jewish Archives, HUC-JIR/Cincinnati: Aaronsohn, Michael

Dvora Lapson, B.A.; Instructor in Dance, HUC-JIR/New York: Dance

Israel O. Lehman, D.Phil.; Curator of Manuscripts and Special Collections, HUC-JIR/Cincinnati: Vilna

Hildegard Levy, Ph.D.; Visiting Professor, HUC-JIR/Cincinnati: Contributor to unsigned entries

Richard N. Levy*, D.D.; Rabbi; Director, School of Rabbinic Studies, HUC-JIR/Los Angeles: Central Conference of American Rabbis

Jacob Mann, Ph.D., Rabbi; Professor of Jewish History and Talmud, HUC-JIR/Cincinnati: Aaron Ben Joseph Ha-Kohen Sargado; Abraham Ben Isaac Ha-Kohen Ben Al-Furat

Jacob Rader Marcus, Ph.D., Rabbi; Professor of American Jewish History, HUC-JIR/Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives; United States of America

Michael A. Meyer*, Ph.D.; Adolph S. Ochs Professor of Jewish History, HUC-JIR/Cincinnati: Adler, Lazarus Levi; Beer, Berhard; Brillling, Bernhard; Gelber, Nathan Michael; Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion; Hochschule Fuer Die Wissenschaft Des Judentums; Institutum Judaicum Delitzschianum; Juedisch-Literarische Gesellschaft; Lebrecht, Fuerchtegott; Loewenstein, Leopold; Oesterreichische Nationalbibliothek; Silberner, Edmund

Eugene Mihaly, Ph.D.; Rabbi; Professor of Midrash and of Homiletics, HUC-JIR/Cincinnati: Guttmann, Alexander

Herbert H. Paper, Ph.D.; Professor of Linguistics, HUC-JIR/Cincinnati: Bloch, Jules; Judeo-Persian

Jakob J. Petuchowski, Ph.D., Rabbi; Professor of Rabbinics and of Jewish Theology, HUC-JIR/Cincinnati: Nieto, David; Organ; Steinthal, Hermann Heymann; Wiener, Max

Kevin Proffitt, M.A., C.A., Senior Archivist for Research and Collections: American Jewish Archives, HUC-JIR, Cincinnati: Schanfarber, Tobias

Alvin J. Reines, Ph.D., Rabbi; Professor of Philosophy, HUC-JIR/Cincinnati: Abрабanel, Isaac Ben Judah; Diedendruck, Zevi; Metaphysics; Neumann, David; Redemption; Skeptics and Skepticism; Time and Eternity

Kenneth D. Roseman, Ph.D., Rabbi; Assistant Professor of American Jewish History, HUC-JIR/Cincinnati: Freiberg; Goldsmith, Samuel Abraham; Greenstein, Harry; Shroder, William J.

Adam Rubin*, Ph.D.; Assistant Professor, HUC-JIR/Los Angeles: Contributor to unsigned entries

Rachel Sabath-Beit Halachmi*, M.A.; Rabbi; Director of Lay Leadership Education, HUC-JIR/Jerusalem: Borowitz, Eugene B.

Samuel Sandmel, Ph.D., D.H.L., Rabbi; Professor of Bible and Hellenistic Literature, HUC-JIR/Cincinnati: Apostle; Feigin, Samuel Isaac

Judah J. Shapiro, D.Ed.; Lecturer in Jewish History and Sociology, School of Jewish Communal Service, HUC-JIR/New York: Contributor to unsigned entries

Edwin N. Nosow, M.A., Rabbi; Lecturer in History and Literature, HUC-JIR/New York: Passaic-Clifton

Ezra Spicehandler, Ph.D., Rabbi; Professor of Hebrew Literature and Director of Jewish Studies, HUC-JIR/Jerusalem: Bialik, Hayyim Nahman; Broido, Ephraim; Goldberg, Lea; Greenberg, Uri Zvi; Hebrew Literature, Modern; Rahel; Schorr, Joshua Heschel

Ben Zion Wacholder, Ph.D., Rabbi; Professor of Talmud and Rabbinics, HUC-JIR/Cincinnati: Aristeas; Bible; Cleodemus Malchus; Demetrius; Eupolemus; Hecataeus of Abdera; Job, Testament of; Philo; Thallus; Theodotus

Werner Weinberg, Ph.D.; Professor of Hebrew Language and Literature, HUC-JIR/Cincinnati: Kabak, Aaron Abraham; Letteris, Meir

David B. Weisberg, Ph.D.; Assistant Professor of Bible and Semitic Languages, HUC-JIR/Cincinnati: Murashu’s Sons

Dvora E. Weisberg*, Ph.D.; Associate Professor of Rabbinics, HUC-JIR/Los Angeles: Aggadah

Andrea L. Weiss*, Ph.D.; Assistant Professor of Bible, HUC-JIR/New York: Poetry

Wendy Zierler*, Ph.D.; Assistant Professor, Modern Jewish Literature and Feminist Studies, HUC-JIR/New York: Pogrebin, Letty Cottin; Seid, Ruth

Gary P. Zola*, Ph.D.; Associate Professor of the American Jewish Experience, HUC-JIR: American Jewish Archives; Sarna, Jonathan Daniel
On November 19, 2006, Professor Mark Washofsky was honored for being named the Solomon B. Freehof Professor of Jewish Law and Practice, an appointment reflecting Dr. Washofsky’s enormous contribution to the field of Talmud and Jewish law and his service to the Reform Movement as an expert on responsa literature. A distinguished product of HUC-JIR’s rabbinical and graduate studies programs, he demonstrates the excellence of the College-Institute in preparing great Jewish scholars and leaders. He is a most fitting successor to his illustrious teacher and mentor, Dr. Ben Zion Wacholder, who inaugurated this Chair in 1989.

The Freehof Chair was created by beloved members of the Board of Governors – Allen and Selma Berkman, of blessed memory, the parents of our esteemed Governor, Richard Lyle Berkman. Allen and Selma Berkman established this chair as a tribute to their rabbi and friend, Dr. Solomon B. Freehof, a noted rabbinical alumnus of the College-Institute and the foremost authority on traditional Jewish law and Reform Jewish practice of his era.

I t would have been an honor for me to have received a named professorship here at HUC-JIR, no matter what name was on the professorship. But when the professorship is called the Solomon B. Freehof Chair of Jewish Law and Practice, then that is a singular honor. Much of my own academic work as a student of halakhah, the tradition of Jewish law, explores the possible points of connection between halakhah and the religious life of Reform Judaism. This academic passion finds a partial expression in my role as chair of the Responsa Committee of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. Responsa are learned opinions in Jewish law, rabbinical rulings that answer questions of religious practice from the texts and sources of the halakhic tradition. And if there is one thing with which the name Solomon B. Freehof will be forever associated, it is his contribution to the writing of Reform responsa.

Freehof was by no means the first Reform rabbi to write responsa. But as the author of eight published volumes of responsa, containing 520 individual opinions, he dominates the history of this enterprise. It is primarily he who teaches us what Reform responsa are and what it could possibly mean to write them. In that sense, even though I never met him or personally studied with him, Solomon B. Freehof is my teacher.

Now it is a virtue for a student to be jealous for his teacher’s reputation and to defend it against unjustified attack. And that is my purpose today, for there are those within our Reform Movement who find fault with Solomon B. Freehof’s work in the field of Jewish law. These critics do not primarily attack Freehof’s method in writing responsa or his conclusions with respect to any individual question. Rather, they criticize the very legitimacy of Reform responsa in the first place. Reform Jews, after all, do not believe in law. The Reform movement originated as a revolt against much of the legal heritage of the Jewish tradition, rejecting many of the ritual and ceremonial expressions of Jewish religious life.

In recent decades, this rejection has tended to express itself in the concept of autonomy: the assertion that each individual Reform Jew is free to make his or her own self-determined choices in the realm of religious practice. Autonomy means that we reject the authority of Jewish law. We make our own decisions about how to worship, about how to celebrate Shabbat or the festivals, about whether and how to observe the dietary laws. We make those decisions in accordance with our own conscience or judgment; we do not decide to do or not to do something merely because the halakhah tells us so. That’s autonomy; that sort of freedom is what Reform Judaism is all about. But if we believe in autonomy, and if we do not believe in law, then what place can there be for responsa, legal rulings, in the world of Reform Judaism? What business does a Reform rabbi have quoting halakhic sources – the Talmud, the codes, the commentaries, and the responsa of earlier rabbis – when we have declared that halakhah exerts no authority over our religious lives?

Accordingly, a number of Reform Jewish thinkers have through the years criticized Solomon Freehof’s work. They complain that while Freehof may have been a great halakhic scholar, he was a bad theologian; that is, he never came up with a coherent, systematic defense of his study of Jewish law from the standpoint of Reform Jewish religious doctrine and belief. It would have been one thing for Freehof to have pursued his halakhic studies out of a purely personal or academic interest.
Scholars, after all, tend to be interested in weird things; or, as Tolstoy might have put it, every quirky person is quirky in his own way. But Freehof obviously wrote his responsa for Reform Jews to study and to use for religious guidance. And why should they do that, when Reform Jewish theology has declared that we are no longer bound to follow the dictates of Jewish law? Since Freehof supposedly never answered that question, many of his critics declare that his responsa, this literary enterprise to which he devoted so much of his time and energy, were essentially a waste of his time and energy, because they are irrelevant to the religious life of the Reform Jew.

That is what the critics say. But they’re wrong, and today I’d like to set the record straight.

Solomon B. Freehof did not write his responsa in a theological vacuum. On the contrary: he did think about why a Reform rabbi ought to write halakhic responsa, and he does offer a theoretical justification for that activity. His justification may or may not persuade you. But then, we could say the same for the forgotten. I only know about it thanks to the magnificent resources of the Klau Library. The lecture reads like an *apologia pro vita sua*, a full-fledged defense of the work that has become synonymous with the name “Freehof.” I cannot do his argument justice in the time available to me this afternoon. But I want to try to summarize it as best I can. In doing so, I hope to establish that Freehof indeed gave a great deal of traditional literature that derives and defines and describes these forms of action is the literature of the *halakhah*. Simply put, Judaism as we know it is created and takes its form in the books of Jewish law; you cannot live a Jewish life in any recognizable sense of that term without the guidance of the texts and sources of the *halakhah*.

Freehof meant this insight as a response to those Reform Jews who claimed that ours was a “prophetic Judaism,” that skips over the post-Biblical Rabbinic tradition and that builds itself entirely upon the moral teachings of the Biblical prophets. Our Judaism, Freehof insisted, is not and never has been “Biblical.” The Bible may be the source of Judaism’s great ethical ideas, but our actual religious life — our liturgy, our Sabbath and festival observance, our religious calendar, our marriage and burial practices and so forth and so on — is born in the Talmud, not in the Bible. Thus, said Freehof, “there need be no sharp distinction between Biblical and post-Biblical literature. God may well speak through both.” Now that was something of a revolutionary statement for a classical Reform rabbi like Solomon B. Freehof to make. And that is what Solomon B. Freehof said.

The second element of Freehof’s argument concerns the *study of* Jewish law, which the tradition refers to as the *mitzvah of talmud Torah*. He notes that precisely because the study of the *halakhah* was considered a religious duty, “Jewish life became essentially a

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vast educational system in which the essential part of the universal curriculum was the study of the law.” For many centuries, the study of the Talmud and halakhah has been the focal point of Jewish intellectual activity; the Jewish mind was shaped and educated in the yeshivah, the law schools of our tradition. This study, carried on by generation after generation of Jews, both laypersons and scholars, produced a tremendous outpouring of literature – commentaries, codes, responsa – that in turn became the subject of study for future generations. Freehof spares no superlatives in describing this accomplishment:

Jewish one, we must become students of the halakhah, the literature that our people have produced in their ongoing effort to understand God’s will for their lives. That was a provocative statement for a classical Reform rabbi to make. And that is what Solomon B. Freehof said.

By combining these two insights Freehof poses a challenge to his fellow Reform Jews. He asks: what do we mean when we say that we are “Jews”? What is the form and substance of this religion of ours that we insist on calling “Judaism”? If “Judaism” to us is no more and no less than the sum total of our own choices, a creation of this time Jews are entitled to think or say or do whatever we want and to call it Jewish. But if we choose to live an authentically Jewish life, a life that is modern, yes, and liberal and Reform, but Jewish all the same, then we have no choice but to nurture a strong and vibrant relationship with the halakhah. And if that means we have to accept a notion of structure, of continuity, and of legal discipline within our Reform practice, then so be it. That was a daring statement for a classical Reform rabbi to make. And that is what Solomon B. Freehof said.

Now Freehof was and remained a classical Reform rabbi. He was no starry-eyed romantic; his interest in halakhah was no Fiddler-on-the-Roof-inspired nostalgia trip, let alone evidence of a trend toward “creeping Orthodoxy” in the Reform Movement. Like the good modernist he was, Freehof always maintained his capacity to approach the law with the critical eye of the trained academic scholar. He freely acknowledged that elements of the halakhah, particularly as these are interpreted by contemporary Orthodox rabbis, contradict some of the most deeply-held intellectual, aesthetic, and ethical commitments of Reform Judaism. The times have changed; our religious outlook has changed with them; we are right, therefore, to declare our independence from those parts of our ancient and medieval legal system that have become frozen in place. But, as Freehof makes clear, the attempt of radical Reform Judaism to abandon the legal tradition in its entirety was an overreaction, a serious mistake. Better, he says, for us to take our part in halakhah, the central discourse of historical Jewish religious life, even as we criticize what others have said in its name. Better, he says, that we make our own unique and creative liberal contribution to the development of Jewish law.

Let me put this in another way.

It is in the sources of Jewish law that we encounter the foundations of Jewish religious experience, the patterns and institutions of Jewish religious behavior, and the arena in which the Jewish people have over the centuries exercised the lion’s share of their intellectual and cultural creativity.

Jewish law studies are “the essence and the climax of Jewish culture,” an intellectual activity “widespread to an extent never before achieved or since paralleled in any historic social group”; “we must conclude,” he says, “that the Jewish study of the law was the greatest suffusion of intellectual activity that the world has seen.” The study of the law, he concedes, is not necessarily the deepest kind of study nor the most important subject with which to preoccupy the mind. But for two thousand years it has been the central preoccupation of the Jewish mind. Therefore, if we want our Reform religious culture to be an authentically and place, then surely we are free to define it any way we wish. But if our Judaism is not entirely our own creation; to the extent that it is rooted in the heritage of am Yisrael, the collective religious and cultural Jewish people, then we cannot with any intellectual honesty ignore the tradition of the halakhah. For it is in the sources of Jewish law that we encounter the foundations of Jewish religious experience, the patterns and institutions of Jewish religious behavior, and the arena in which the Jewish people have over the centuries exercised the lion’s share of their intellectual and cultural creativity. Yes, we are free to choose; we Reform Freehof challenges us not to allow our Reform Judaism to come to resemble a cut flower that, though beautiful to behold, is severed from the roots that nourish it and give it strength. And so he wrote responsa, through which step by step, piece by piece, and question by question, he plants our Reform Jewish religious life right back into the halakhic tradition, the ground from which all Judaism springs. That was an unusual thing for a classical Reform rabbi to do. But that is what Solomon B. Freehof did. And it is fitting, especially on this occasion, that we acknowledge his deed in lasting gratitude.

10 • THE CHRONICLE
Is God Always Holy?

Rabbi Mark Miller, LA ’07

Every year on Yom Kippur we read these inspiring words from Leviticus 19: “You shall be holy for I, your God, am holy.” Some people point to this verse and argue that striving to be holy is at the very core of what it means to be Jewish. But what, exactly, does it mean to be holy? Although we throw the word around casually today, I believe we have lost a concrete sense of holiness – what does it look like, how does one achieve it, can it be lost? And so, the best way to gain a more tangible understanding of holiness is to return to our primary source – the Bible.

The Bible is full of holiness. In fact, the Hebrew root which forms the word ‘holy’ (שדך) appears nearly 900 times, conveying a range of ideas. Every place we read about holiness helps us define its original meaning better, and one notable example is in the Book of Hosea.

Hosea lived in the 8th century B.C.E., a time of great change in the long-term fortunes of Israel. He was writing as the once-mighty kingdom of David and Solomon had split into northern Israel and southern Judah, and his prophecies reflect the turmoil in the northern kingdom just before its destruction in 722 B.C.E. But even though these political events provide a dramatic backdrop for Hosea, the truth is that he primarily was concerned with the way his people had been dabbling into the local Canaanite religion. When we read this text, it must actually be understood as a theological statement – and one that offers a rare glimpse into an ancient understanding of God and holiness.

The Story

Hosea 11 presents a brief history of God’s relationship with the people Israel. It describes how God has loved Israel as a child, but since the exodus from Egypt, the child has gone his own way by sacrificing to other gods. In apparent anger, God declares that “Because they refuse to repent, a sword shall descend upon their towns and consume their limbs…” for my people persists in its defection from Me” (Hosea 11:5-7). Verses 8 and 9, however, offer a twist, as God does not destroy Israel for her insolence, after all. The question is, why?

Unfortunately, the scholars who offer these standard interpretations miss the subtle, subversive, perhaps surprising, theological message, which is hidden near the end of chapter 11. In vv. 8-9 God is neither judging Israel nor saving Israel, but is powerless to do either! God is, as we shall see, bound by being “in your presence,” which alters the very nature of God. God’s holiness in these verses, derived from and dependent upon Israel’s presence, will not allow the active destruction of Israel.

Translation

It is never easy to give a perfect rendition of Hebrew text, and in this case the translation can give a very different impression of the prophet’s meaning. My interpretation of vv. 8-9 offers crucial differences from a typical translation, especially the end of verse 9:

11:8 – How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I give you up like Admah, treat you like Zeboim? My heart has turned on me, my comfort and compassion have grown warm and tender together.

11:9 – I will not act on my fierce anger, I cannot change in order to destroy Ephraim. For I am God, and not man. In your presence I am Holy, unable to come (to you) enraged.

Every standard translation offers a variation of “I will not destroy Israel because I am God and not man, the Holy One in your presence.” Holiness here is generally interpreted by commentators as an analogy or metaphor for God’s presence. But is it possible that the text actually means what it says? God’s holiness – meaning a specific attribute of God – is present within Israel. For Hosea, it is not that God is holy or not holy, nor is it that Israel is holy or not holy; rather, when you put God and Israel together, the outcome is holiness.

Analysis

If we are to gain a greater understanding of God in the context of Hosea, it is important that we ask the right question: Why did God change God’s mind and fail to execute the appropriate punishment against Israel?

Love

Wolff sums up the scholarly position when he argues that love “proves to be the incom-
Is God Always Holy?

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If vv. 8-9 hold the key to understanding why God does not follow through with the appropriate punishment of Israel, the word ‘love’ is conspicuously missing. Instead, it is holiness that suffuses these verses and answers our question. According to Hosea, God is actually defined by Israel and, shockingly, God’s holiness is apparent only when in the presence of Israel. How do we know?

ADMAB/ZEBOIM

There are several elements in Hosea which hint at holiness, rather than love, as the key to understanding these verses. Perhaps the most convincing is the mention of the cities Admah and Zebaim, which are used essentially as synonyms for Sodom and Gomorrah. Although this is a thinly-veiled reference to God’s destruction of those cities in Genesis, the difference is that there is no mention of ‘holy’ in any rendition of the Sodom story. They were not simply destroyed due to their wickedness, they were destroyed by an absence of God’s holiness. So how can we explain one situation where a not-specifically-holy God destroys and another situation where a specifically-holy God does not destroy?

IN YOUR MIDST (PRESENCE)

Most interpretations assume that this phrase indicates somehow that God, the Holy One, is in the midst of Israel as the decision not to destroy them is made. Although this is true, a careful look at the structure of this phrase indicates something more. Grammatically, the text does not say that God is holy and in your (meaning Israel’s) presence. Instead, it says that God is holy in your presence. This minor difference tells us that, in this context, holiness is inherently tied to God being in the presence of Israel.

HOLINESS

In Hosea God simply cannot swoop down and devastate Israel. Once God arrives in Israel’s presence, God’s very nature is changed – to holy – and God is unable to follow through with that vengeful act. The text makes it exceedingly clear that the attribute which distinguishes God from humanity is God’s holiness. I believe that commentators across the board misuse or misapply the term ‘holy,’ which leads to mistaken conclusions.

Mays, in a typical example, argues that, “‘Holy’ is a synonym for God; it indicates the numinous and dynamic, the mysterium tremendum, the incomparable awesome force of the divine.” But the word Kadosh appears 28 times in the Prophets. Most often, Kadosh is paired with Yisrael to make a title for God (‘Holy One of Israel’). The word Kadosh alone occurs only six times, and only once in the entire prophetic writings, in Isaiah 40:25, does it appear to be a noun meaning something akin to ‘the Holy One.’ It is extremely rare, and terribly out of character, for the prophets to use the word Kadosh to refer to God rather than to speak about God. Kadosh is a descriptive term, which means that our passage in Hosea 11 cannot be read as ‘the Holy One in your midst.’

Instead, it would seem that God is revealing a vital piece of information through Hosea. B’kir’icha Kadosh must mean, ‘in your presence, I am holy.’ Within the context of Hosea, God is holy – specifically and only in the presence of Israel!

In order to confirm this reading, we must ask, when was God not in the midst of Israel? The answer, cleverly suggested by Hosea 11:8, is during the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Remember, these were foreign cities, and God brutally destroyed them in a fashion that could hardly be called ‘holy.’ Since God was not in Israel’s presence, as in the Hosea text, God was free to act in any manner – even in an ‘unholy’ way.

Many commentators agree that these verses in Hosea 11 are vital to our understanding of God and the Bible. Beeby makes perhaps the grandest statement, saying “I am confident that here we penetrate deeper into the heart and mind of God than anywhere else in the Old Testament.” Unfortunately, these scholars fail to draw their conclusions about God from the text and instead fall into previous patterns that fit with their preconceived notions vis-à-vis God’s relationship with Israel.

Hosea was not defining a relationship as much as he was defining God! In the end, Hosea is gently suggesting that holiness is not an inherent state for God. Instead, when we join together with God in partnership, our connection creates holiness.

i Wolff and Daniels, among others, base this determination on the regulations regarding rebellious sons in Deuteronomy 21:18-21, which instruct that “on the accusation of a son by his parents, the city elders shall stone him to death with stones; ‘so you shall purge the evil from your midst; and all Israel shall hear, and fear.’”


iii See Yee and Emerson, for examples.

iv Deuteronomy 29:23 mentions Admah and Zebaim as two cities that were destroyed along with Sodom and Gomorrah, though they are not mentioned in the original story in Genesis.

v While an idiom such as ‘I have had a change of heart’ may be appropriate, I find a closer translation to be more powerful as it conveys a sense that God does not have control of this change.

vi Many commentators offer ‘again’ here, but God has not yet destroyed Israel! The remainder almost all offer ‘return’ as a literal translation. But I am convinced by Schungel-Straumann (Helen. “God as Mother in Hosea 11” cited in Brenner, Athalya, ed. A Feminist Companion to the Latter Prophets, Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), who argues that Ashov refers to the previous verse, where God announced the intention not to give up on Israel. And so God’s ‘return’ in this case would be to change God’s mind about that decision. Further, ‘cannot’ will lead nicely into the idea that God is fundamentally different in Israel’s presence – a difference that even God may not be able to control.

vii This phrase contains the meaning of the entire verse, and will be fully explicated in this paper.

viii This is a slight departure from the text, which seems to only say that God will not come while enraged. However, given the immediately preceding statement, that God is holy in the presence of Israel, I would argue that the latter statement implies that God must be holy in that situation, and is unable to be otherwise.


x I realize that love is a tempting conclusion to draw from Hosea 11:8-9, based on the preceding verses. However, it seems to me that much of this scholarship has been influenced by Christian ideas, which have developed over time into an article of faith, even in the scholarly arena. Almost every commentator I read viewed this passage as laying the groundwork for the eventual message of the New Testament; namely, that God’s love is the raison d’être and supreme expression of our relationship with God. And while God’s love is certainly a powerful Jewish concept, I do not believe it is the fundamental building block of our faith. This passage provides no less than a fundamental understanding of God and our relationship with God. In a Jewish sense, the bottom line is not love, but holiness.


xii Beeby, p. 140.
Dr. Alfred Gottschalk’s life’s mission – to sustain HUC-JIR as a successor to the institutions that were destroyed during the Holocaust – was determined by the formative experiences of his early youth in Nazi Germany. Born in 1930 in the small town of Oberwesel on the banks of the Rhine River, in whose environs his family had resided for over 350 years as merchants of wine, hides, and cattle, he became a witness to the Nazis’ persecution of his small Jewish community of 35 families in an overall population of 3,500 townspeople.

In September 2006 Gottschalk had the opportunity to revisit Oberwesel, together with his children and grandchildren, to reflect on the past, and to educate younger generations about the ultimate consequences of prejudice and intolerance. His purpose was to dedicate a memorial to the town’s Jews who had been deported to their deaths or had fled from Nazi terror during 1933-1945. He was accompanied by an interfaith group of scholars, educators, and clergy, including Professor Tony Perzigian, Vice President of the University of Cincinnati, and the Honorary Consul of Germany for the Ohio tri-state area – Professor Richard Schade of the University of Cincinnati’s German Studies Department.

Gottschalk’s mother was interrogated almost daily regarding his father’s whereabouts. After extensive harassment, he and his mother’s citizenship was revoked and they became stateless. His mother received an exit visa, but he did not. “My grandfather’s reserve of some silver, buried in our wine cellar as a precaution against inflation during the interwar years, was used to bribe an official to procure an exit visa for Germany for me.

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By the time we had our exit visas from Germany and our affidavits to America, however, our additional visas to America had expired. Fortunately my mother was admitted to the U.S. in 1939, one month before World War II, on one of the last ships to leave Hamburg. I got in with her, thanks to a special above the quota visa established by President Roosevelt to rescue children out of Nazi-occupied Europe.”

Gottschalk vividly recalls Kristallnacht on November 9, 1938, when the Nazis unleashed pogroms throughout Germany and Austria, resulting in the burning of over a thousand synagogues, the vandalization of Jewish property, and the arrest and deportation to concentration camps of 30,000 Jews. Oberwesel’s synagogue, built in 1886, was tarred but not burned by the Nazis, for fear of burning the two gentile homes attached to both sides of the synagogue building.

“The morning after the desecration of Oberwesel’s synagogue, I watched my grandfather wade into the stream of freezing water running past the building in order to rescue the torn fragments of the Torah scrolls and prayer books. As he handed these precious scraps to me, he said ‘we need to piece the Torah together.’ It was at that moment, in my heart, I believe, that I embarked on the path to becoming a rabbi.”

Gottschalk also remembers how his elderly widower grandfather, Gustav Gerson, remained in Oberwesel after their departure, was denounced by a Nazi court, evicted from his home, and sequestered in a Juden house together with all the other remaining Jews of the town. He was the father of twin sons, Berthold and Alfred, who were deemed national heroes for having been killed on the Russian front in 1915 while fighting for Kaiser Wilhelm during World War I. “My grandfather Gustav was a courageous man, for a time he served as the head of the Jewish community. One of my most precious memories is standing between my father and grandfather at prayer in the synagogue, while my mother and grandmother would throw candy for us children from the gallery above, after the Torah reading.”

The Oberwesel synagogue (at right), dedicated in 1886. Whenever the Rhine River flooded, it would cause the stream in front of the synagogue to rise. The morning after Kristallnacht, Gottschalk helped his grandfather retrieve the fragments of the desecrated Torah scrolls and prayer books from this stream.
Gu stav died of a heart attack and was buried in an unmarked grave in the Jewish cemetery in November 1940. Most of the Jews who remained in Oberwesel and the surrounding area were deported in 1942 to Minsk and Auschwitz, where Gottschalk’s paternal grandparents, Jacob and Minna Gottschalk of Niederzissen, and their children and grandchildren perished. His aunt, Else Trum, was sent to Terezin and was killed in a deportation to the East.

On Sunday morning just before the dedication of the Holocaust memorial, Gottschalk participated in an interfaith service with the local Lutheran, Catholic, and Episcopalian clergy. Two thousand people attended the worship service in the Catholic Liebfrauenkirche, located at the end of the street from his childhood home. “As a youngster pedaling my homemade boxcar, I was not allowed by my mother to go past the portal leading to that cathedral, for fear of the consequences, he remembers.”

Indeed, Oberwesel had a long history of anti-Semitism, dating back to the medieval blood libel case of the Heilige Werner, who allegedly had been murdered by Jews. For centuries, Werner’s annual saint’s day was a cause for pogroms and ongoing violence – Gottschalk himself was accused of killing Werner and bloodied as a young child.

The dedication of the Holocaust memorial took place in the central square of the town, in front of where the 1886 synagogue had once stood. In attendance were those who had organized this project – Mayor Manfred Zeuner, monument architect Hubertus Jäckel, historian Doris Sporman, the catalysts for the project Barbara Fuchs and her husband Victor, and the city council – as well as local television and press, and hundreds of residents of the town, including some of Gottschalk’s schoolmates, who at a reception the following day brought photos of their shared childhoods. Back then, he and Ruthie Lichtenstein were the only Jewish children in his grade; today, Gottschalk is one of the two surviving Jews of the town.

The monument is comprised of a metal Jewish star that floats within the emptiness between two slate rectangular forms – one intact, the second jagged-edged. The void is a visual metaphor for the absence of the 35 families who were deported to their deaths or fled Germany during the Shoah. The names of Alfred Gottschalk, together with those of his parents Max and Erna, his maternal grandparents Henriette and Gustav Gerson, and his aunt Else Trum are mounted on the fragmented stone marker.

At the ceremony Gottschalk said, “Jews lived and raised families here for hundreds of years, and left their imprint on this town. They were loyal to their country and sacrificed for it during the First World War, as did my uncles, after one of whom I am named. During the Nazi years, there were only a few friends who did not abandon us or their other Jewish friends, and the preciousness of their goodness, amidst the overwhelming evil, needs to be remembered. We who were able to emigrate and escape the “Final Solution” that Hitler had planned for us, must continue to bear witness and carry on the responsibility of memorialization. I am grateful to the city of Oberwesel for the decision to erect this monument to the memory of its former Jewish residents, and to commemorate and celebrate their lives through educational programs.”

Later that day, Gottschalk also dedicated a personal family monument. “With the help of German historians researching the Jewish communities of the Rhineland, I was able to discover the location of Gustav and Henriette Gerson’s unmarked graves in the records of the town’s Chevra Kadisha burial society. They had been interred not far from the graves of their twin sons and the memorial to the fallen Jewish soldiers who fought valiantly for Germany in World War I. Surrounded by my family, our group, and caring townspeople, I was able to dedicate a monument for both of my grandparents in the forgotten hilltop Jewish cemetery of Perscheid/Oberwesel.”

The Perscheid/Oberwesel Jewish cemetery.
(Below) The dedication of a headstone in memory of Gottschalk’s grandparents, Gustav and Henriette Gerson.
The culminating event took place the next day at the local high school, where Gottschalk was invited to address 320 students on the legacy and dangers of racial hatred. “They asked me how far I went in school in Oberwesel. I showed them a photograph of myself with my school bag, inscribed ‘my first year.’ They were shocked to hear that there was no second year, because in 1937 Ruthie and I were thrown out of our class. The next day, two nuns came to the house and invited us to study in the Catholic school, which we did for a short time, until the nuns were forced to let us go.” Gottschalk’s memory of their compassion inspired his collegial relationships with Catholic leaders in America throughout his twenty-five years as President of HUC-JIR.

From Oberwesel, Gottschalk journeyed to Dresden to represent HUC-JIR at the first Ordination Ceremony of the Abraham Geiger College for the Training of Rabbis for Europe, the first liberal rabbinical seminary to be established in Germany since the Holocaust. Established in 1999 in the birthplace of the Reform Movement, this academic institution is affiliated with the World Union for Progressive Judaism and is an institute at the University of Potsdam, just outside of Berlin. It was named after a founder of Reform Judaism in Germany, whose call in 1836 for the establishment of a Jewish theological department at a university inspired the founding of the Jewish Theological Seminary in Breslau in 1854 and the Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums (Higher Institute for Jewish Studies) in Berlin in 1870 – both of which were closed down by the Nazis.

Six decades after the Shoah, Judaism is resurgent in Germany today, with a Jewish population that has more than quadrupled since 1990 to 200,000 persons because of the influx of former Soviet Jews. Germany has the largest Reform presence on the European continent. The need for rabbinical leadership for the growing numbers of new synagogues and Jewish schools is urgent, with about twenty rabbis currently spread out over eighty congregations claiming 4,000 members.

The Geiger College’s mission to educate rabbis for Jewish communities in Central and Eastern Europe was realized with the September 14th ordination of its first graduating class: Daniel Alter, who is now leading congregations with several hundred members each in Oldenburg and Delmenhorst; Tomas Kucera, who is the rabbi of a liberal Jewish congregation in Munich; and Malcolm Matritiani, who is one of two rabbis at South Africa’s largest progressive congregation in Cape Town, serving 1,000 families.

Gottschalk participated in the Ordination Ceremonies held in the Dresden Town Hall and the newly rebuilt synagogue. In his address, he said, “As one who witnessed the onset of the destruction of European Jewry in Germany, the opportunity to participate in this celebration and help launch a new chapter in the regeneration of the Jewish people is a source of great personal fulfillment.” He noted that “many of HUC-JIR’s senior faculty and recently retired and deceased colleagues, including my predecessors as President – Julius Morgenstern and Nelson Glueck – were exemplars of the scholarly traditions first formulated by the scientific approach to the study of Judaism established by Germany’s great Jewish academies.”

He spoke about HUC-JIR’s historic role in rescuing Jewish scholars out of Nazi Germany and bringing them to Cincinnati, where they taught generations of students and provided the foundation for HUC-JIR’s graduate studies program. Gottschalk charged the ordinees “to educate their Jewish communities within the context of a people...
reborn out of the ashes, as a Jewish people with a rich mix of ethnic variations of religious beliefs, customs, and traditions, and where the existence of the State of Israel and its pervasive influence on contemporary Jewry gives rise to a new challenge of integrating the best of our religious, ethical, and political experiences.”

Gottschalk’s mission to renew Jewish life and learning also took him to Nanjing, China, where he participated in the November 21st inauguration of the Glazer Institute of Jewish Studies at Johns Hopkins University’s campus at Nanjing University. Gottschalk represented HUC-JIR at the ceremonies, which celebrated the Institute’s important role in advancing Jewish studies among Chinese college students and fostering understanding between the Chinese and Jewish people following the establishment of full diplomatic relations between China and Israel in January 1992.

The Institute has launched the first Chinese edition of the Encyclopedia Judaica; has translated and published numerous volumes on Jewish history and theology, including Gottschalk’s Hebrew book on Ahad Ha-amin, Bible and Bible Tradition; offers courses on Judaism, Jewish history and culture, and Holocaust studies for students in undergraduate, M.A., and Ph.D. programs; organizes international conferences; and holds workshops for over 100 Chinese scholars. Gottschalk has donated a substantial number of books to the Institute’s library collection of 7,000 volumes—making it the largest Jewish studies library in China.

At the inauguration Gottschalk expressed gratitude to Professor Xu Xin for fostering a unique relationship between HUC-JIR and Jewish studies in China. They first met fourteen years ago in China, when Xu Xin was a professor of American Literature and an admirer of the writings of Isaac Bashevis Singer, in whom he found echoes of traditional Chinese modes of thinking and living.

Gottschalk arranged for HUC-JIR to host Xu Xin on a visit to the United States in order to study how departments of Judaic studies were developed and administered. While residing in the dorm on the Cincinnati campus, he studied the Klau Library’s unique collection of manuscripts from Kaifeng, China and decided that one day he would like to send Chinese graduate students to study at HUC-JIR in order to train scholars who could succeed him. After surveying Jewish studies programs for several months throughout America, he returned to China to establish the first Department of Jewish Studies for Chinese scholars, teachers, and students, with the support of the Scheuer and Skirball Foundations. Thanks to Xu Xin’s initiative, several Chinese graduate students preparing to be the next generation of Judaic scholars in China have studied at HUC-JIR’s School of Graduate Studies in Cincinnati, in a combined program with Bar-Ilan University in Israel.

In his address Gottschalk stressed the shared values of the Jewish and Chinese traditions, as demonstrated through the centrality of family and clan; the heritage of scholarship and culture; and the appreciation for both the material and artistic in everyday life. He spoke of the role of lifelong education in Judaism, and how learning is a bridge between the knowledge and values of the past and passionate involvement in the present. “As the philosopher Franz Rosenzweig observed,” Gottschalk stated, “the purpose of Jewish learning is to create an idealistic human being. When a scholar seeks to become a creative, thinking individual who views all knowledge as linked to life, his learning and his humanity blend together. You have taken on this task in the new China to understand and teach the ideals of Jewish tradition, whose basic values deal with the power of the spirit, not the spirit of power. The scholars and students of this Institute have the opportunity to make a creative difference.”

From Germany to China, Gottschalk’s journeys have demonstrated a singular mission: to reconstruct the Jewish past, establish new foundations for the Jewish present, and vitalize the Jewish future. In doing so, Dr. Alfred Gottschalk has not only extended the reach of HUC-JIR throughout the world, he has reminded people of all faiths and traditions of Judaism’s inspiring message: the sanctity of life, the imperative of human understanding, and the aspiration for peace.
“Are Jews Still Liberal?” was the theme for a panel of community leaders and national experts who shared their perspectives on the key elements that impact Jewish political behavior. The panelists included Dr. Bruce Phillips, Professor of Jewish Communal Service, who offered commentary on the data regarding Jewish political behavior; Daniel Sokatch, Director of the Progressive Jewish Alliance, who has been identified by The Forward as one of the fifty most influential young Jewish American leaders; Joel Kotkin of the New America Foundation, noted author and commentator on public affairs; David Lehrer, President of Community Advocates, Inc. whose views are frequently cited in the Los Angeles Times and other media outlets; and Arnold Steinberg, a noted political strategist and analyst, who has advised key politicians and candidates.

The context for the panel discussion was set by noting that there are various historical realities and theoretical principles designed to help explain Jewish political behavior in this country. Between 1860 and 1932, Jews in fact voted Republican, in part out of recognition of Lincoln and in turn due to the support rendered by Republican leadership during that period on behalf of European Jewry. One of the explanations of the Jewish vote since 1932 suggested that Jews coming to America in the period of 1880-1920 had lived under oppressive regimes and were more likely to seek out progressive or liberal political causes and candidates. Another explanation suggests that the prophetic tradition tended to align with more liberal political positions and that Jews, as a result, were more likely to see a synergy between their religious values and those of the Democratic Party. Historian Arthur Hertzberg had concluded that Jews had constructed their own form of liberalism that embraced American national values and the Jewish historic experience. “Liberal chic” reflected yet another perspective, where critics had offered the notion that such an embrace of particular progressive and even radical causes was seen as socially acceptable and as a form of melding into the American mainstream. The connection to liberal causes or, for that matter, adopting conservative views served as another point of entry into the society, easing the assimilation process by voting as one’s neighbors did.

The panelists presented a number of additional views to explain the Jewish liberal tradition and their perspectives on current political behavior. While many of the comments offered at this session were critical of Jewish liberal perspectives, there was a clear acknowledgment of the profound and continued engagement of Jews with liberal ideas and causes.

Degrees of Liberalism: Jews remain more liberal than other groups in America but are less liberal than in earlier periods of their political history. Among all ethnic and racial groups, Jews are the most likely to consider themselves “liberal.” 48% of Jews identify themselves as “liberal,” compared to 26% of all Americans. Jews hold to the most liberal attitudes with regard to government expenditures in such areas as education, mass
value of helping others rather than as a threat to the Constitutional order of the society. While some Jewish conservatives applaud and acknowledge the role played by Jews in the civil rights movement, a different environment exists today and the issues are no longer the same, yet they feel many liberals are caught in a time warp. All sides acknowledge that just as with other voting groups, Jewish political loyalties are slow to change.

Red States/Blue States: The degree of liberalism is in some measure a reflection of geography. Several panelists commented that geography, and in particular suburbia, may help to define or shape the “levels” of Jewish liberalism found in the United States today. They find that Jews who live on the two coasts tend to be more liberal than those living in “Red State” communities. Similarly, Jews moving to more conservative suburban communities may actually take on or adopt the political views compatible with their neighbors, a pattern that seems to have existed with regard to how Jewish political behavior has been constructed. Similarly, “new Jews,” namely immigrants who have come to this country from Iran, the former Soviet Union, and other repressive regimes, tend to be more conservative in their outlook. There is significant evidence that these constituencies have a stronger connection to the Republican Party, tending to identify with security and defense issues as well as on certain conservative social policies.

Are Jews Politically Stuck? What does it mean today to identify oneself with the Democratic Party? Rather than party loyalty, Jews seem to be expressing their liberal preferences with reference to specific social codes and practices, such as in matters pertaining to questions of civil liberties and church-state separation. According to several panelists, liberalism today represents a “hodge-podge” of special interests. Liberals, according to one commentator, must be seen as “morally depraved” by failing to employ the core principles of liberalism to the great issues of our time. Similarly, this critic suggested that most of the economic tenants of liberalism have long since been dispelled by Milton Friedman and by the new global business realities.

Some in the Jewish community, according to one discussant, have developed a closed mind with reference to long held views, such as the principle associated with church-state separation. Rather than seeing the charitable choice initiative as an efficient dispenser of social services, many Jews have continued to resist this new model of government partnering with the religious sector. Faith-based legislation, this commentator would argue, ought to be seen as an extension of the Jewish value of helping others rather than as a threat to the Constitutional order of the society. While some Jewish conservatives applaud and acknowledge the role played by Jews in the civil rights movement, a different environment exists today and the issues are no longer the same, yet they feel many liberals are caught in a time warp. All sides acknowledge that just as with other voting groups, Jewish political loyalties are slow to change.

Is Marriage One of the New Barometers of the Jewish Vote? Jews are becoming more Republican, according to HUC-JIR Professor Bruce Phillips. He noted that 15% of American Jews born before 1945 identified themselves as “Republicans” in contrast to 20% of Jewish Gen X’ers and Generation Y’ers (individuals born from 1965 to 1983). Over the past number of years, Democratic Party allegiance has declined from 55% to 43%. According to Phillips, as intermarriage rates increase the impact on Jewish liberalism is likewise diminished. Of those respondents to the National Jewish Population Study who had two Jewish parents, only 12% identified themselves as Republican, while those who came from households with mixed parentage had 24% reporting that they were Republican.

Unpacking the Israel Card: The Israel card ought to place Jewish voters squarely in the Republican camp according to several panelists. One finds conservative columnists asking “how is it possible for Jews to still be liberal” in light of the favorable policies put forth by the Bush administration in defense of Israel? According to one discussant, thoughtful Jewish liberals are shocked and paralyzed by the levels of anti-Semitism and anti-Israel sentiment found in the left but have few options at this point within the Democratic Party. The litmus test of a candidate and a party ought to be its pro-Israel position, suggested one of the presenters. If such is the case, how can so many Jews remain “Democrats”?

In turn, this heightened sense of treating Israel as a special and distinctive nation has led many Jews to abandon the same rational standards of political judgment that they apply to other foreign policy questions and to the general public policy debate. In effect, the Israel card has come to represent a distinctive and separate political measure for assessing a politician’s credentials. There has been a tendency on the part of some Jews to cast a broad-brush condemnation of politicians, be they liberal or conservative, as either being “anti-Israel” or even “anti-Semitic” should they question or oppose specific
ARE JEWS STILL LIBERAL?

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Israeli policies or particular practices. Often, there is little distinction made between individuals who are hostile to Israel's very existence and those who raise particular questions or objections to specific policies. In this area of the discussion, it was noted that an open dialogue on Israel within the Jewish community itself seems to be lacking, thereby preventing the community from fully exploring the diversity of opinions that exist on Israel and thereby often obscuring how some “liberal” institutions often adopt the government of Israel's policy positions without considering alternative perspectives.

The “Appearance” of Liberalism: Some Jews, it was suggested, take on the characteristics of being liberal for social status. There may be two kinds of American Jewish liberals, according to one of the panelists. “Cognitive Elites” or fashionably liberal, might be assigned to a specific economic and social class of Jews. For this element, liberalism represents “an easy position to take,” as it serves their particular business interests or their social agenda, allowing them to connect to a specific cadre of influential players within the society. Other Jewish liberals were described as “ideologically-committed” to a specific political agenda. Such a position was seen by liberal critics as problematic in light of the complexities of 21st-century policy options. Citing affirmative action, one respondent suggested that the rationale that may have at one time given claim to this policy seemed no longer to have merit.

Making Choices: In a period when social issues are seen as more complex, Jews are having a more difficult time defining their liberal credentials. But there is evidence of a shift in Jewish patterns of voting on the local and state level, suggested several panelists, where Jews seem more ready to vote their social and financial interests in these elections, yet our community continued to evidence a more traditional liberal bent in federal campaigns. Examples of specific mayoral contests and governors’ races were offered by panelists when referencing this dichotomy in political behavior.

Do Neo-Conservatives Represent the New Political Address for American Jews? One respondent noted that neo-conservatives may be the next major point of connection between blacks and Jews, for example, replacing the earlier liberal, Democratic linkage built around Franklin Roosevelt and sustained during the civil rights era. Critics of Jewish liberalism suggested that political imagination is dead on the left and more vibrant on the right, as evidenced by the number of newly-emerging Republican Jewish activists. “When governments get strong, Jews get screwed” suggested one participant. Powerful governments are inherently problematic for Jews and other minorities, a viewpoint that has yet to resonate with most Jews, he would argue.

Why Then Are Republicans Missing the Boat? A factor in scaring off disaffected Democrats has been the failure of the Republican Party itself. The impact of Watergate, the current administration’s incompetence in handling its foreign policy objectives, and the scandals over the past number of years linked to the Republican-controlled Congress have only added to these negative perceptions of Republican leadership. Likewise, the absence of Jews in the ranks of the Republican Party has not helped to attract Jewish engagement and participation. Many Jews remain intellectually uncomfortable in identifying with conservative positions. The panelists agreed that one of the primary characteristics of Jewish voters wherever they are to be found on the political spectrum is that they simply do not tolerate mismanagement and scandal. The current disgust with government in general and both parties in particular has led to the growth of a significant segment of Jewish voters who describe themselves today as “independent.”

Despite the frustrations of some critics of the Jewish liberal tradition, the discussants were reminded of the fact that Jews remain basically liberal. A number of theoretical principles have evolved to explain why Jews have embraced over time this liberal political tradition. In explaining Jewish political behavior, one respondent noted that Jews are amongst the most respected and accepted groups within American life and their politics and active participation represented an extension of their level of comfort and engagement with this society. But such is both the mystery and magic of the American experience! ■

### Political Ideology by Parentage and Religion of Respondent

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*Includes respondents who identify with an Eastern or New Age religion

### Political Preference by Parentage and Religion of Respondent

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*Includes respondents who identify with an Eastern or New Age religion
The Values of the State of Israel as a Jewish and Democratic State

Excerpts of the address presented by Professor Aharon Barak, President (Ret.) of the Supreme Court of Israel, at HUC-JIR’s Ordination and Academic Convocation in Jerusalem on November 10, 2006, when six new Israeli Reform rabbis were ordained. Barak, a child survivor of the Holocaust, was awarded an honorary doctorate for his work to protect human rights and human dignity, to shape the values of the State of Israel as a democratic and Jewish state, and to strengthen pluralism within Israeli society.

We find, therefore, that the phrase “the value of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state” has considerable legal importance. It has a constitutional status. This formulation bears a heavy and important load. It has an effect both on prescribing the scope of a human right and also on prescribing the protection given to it in Israeli law. Hence the considerable importance of the answer to a question: What are the values of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state? How are they determined? What weight is to be given to them? And what is the relationship between the values of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state and its values as a democratic state?

A “Jewish State,” therefore, is the state of the Jewish People; “it is the natural right of the Jewish People, like all other peoples, to be masters of their own fate in their own sovereign state.” A “Jewish State” is a state to which every Jew has the right to immigrate and one of those basic values is the ingathering of the exiles. A “Jewish State” is a state whose history is intertwined with the history of the Jewish People, whose principal language is Hebrew, and whose main festivals reflect its national rebirth. A “Jewish State” is a state primarily concerned with the settlement of Jews in its fields, its towns, and its villages. A “Jewish State” is a state that perpetuates the memory of the Jews who were slaughtered in the Holocaust. A “Jewish State” is a state that fosters Jewish culture, Jewish education, and love of the Jewish People. A “Jewish State” is “the realization of the age-old dream of the redemption of Israel.” A “Jewish State” is a state for which the values of the Torah of Israel, of freedom, justice, equity, and peace, the values of the heritage of Judaism, and the values of Jewish law are among its fundamental values.

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There are two main aspects to the State of Israel as a Jewish state. One is the Zionist aspect and the other is the legal or heritage aspect. It goes without saying that there is a close connection between the Zionist aspect and that of Jewish heritage, and they often overlap. Moreover, there also exists a connection between the values of the State of Israel as a Jewish state and the values of the State of Israel as a democratic state. It was Judaism that has made human dignity a supreme constitutional value by depriving the dignity of man from the honor due to the Creator, because man is created in His image. Human rights, too, find their expression in our heritage of Israel.

A Jewish State is a state that expresses the Zionist vision. It is the vision of children returning to their ancestral land. It is the vision of the national home of every single Jew. Hence, the right of every Jew to immigrate to Israel – a right guaranteed in the Law of Return 5710–1950. A Jewish State in its Zionist aspect is a state whose principal language is Hebrew, whose culture is Jewish, and whose main festivals reflect the national resurgence of the Jewish People; a state that redeems state lands for the settlement thereon of Jews; a state whose national anthem is “HaTikvah” and whose flag is the blue and white flag.

The values of the State of Israel as a Jewish state include its heritage values. We learn about these values from the world of Halakhah itself. In it are to be found the values of the State of Israel as a Jewish state as they have developed throughout the history of the Jewish People over the generations. An outstanding expression of the heritage aspect is to be found in the Legal Foundations Law, which provides: If the court has before it a legal question requiring its decision and has not found an answer to it in legislation, decided cases, or by way of analogy, it shall decide it in the light of the principles of freedom, justice, equity, and peace in the heritage of Israel.

The values of the State of Israel as a democratic state have two bases: the one, the rule of the people through its elected representatives; the other, the rule of certain values and principles, including separation of powers, the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary, and the protection of human rights. For sure, democracy is not just the rule of the majority. It requires the recognition of certain fundamental values, the central ones being human rights. There is no democracy if the majority denies the minority its rights.

To this end, we have to understand that in each of the aspects of the State of Israel as a Jewish state there are differences of opinions and differences of nuances. Zionism is not monolithic. There are within it different, and sometimes opposing, views as to the ways to fulfill the Zionist vision in the State of Israel. In the same way, Judaism is not homogeneous. It contains different streams and differing outlooks. The concept of democracy, too, is not one-dimensional. The world of democracy is rich and multi-faceted. It comprises various and diverse approaches to the proper ways to attain democracy. There are indeed in each of the value components of the State of Israel many, and at times contradictory, trends.

The interpreter – striving for reconciliation and harmony – must take from each of the Zionist, heritage, and democratic sources those values, conceptions, and principles in it that are compatible with the values and principles to be found in other sources. He must not take from them values that produce conflict and contradiction. Thus, for example, if we find in the world of Judaism both a particularistic stream and a universalistic stream, the interpreter will probably adopt the universalistic stream, because it is more compatible with the values of the State of Israel as a democratic state than is the particularistic stream. In the same way, if, within the conception of democracy, it is possible to regard interpersonal relations in different ways, it is only right to adopt that approach that is compatible with the view of Jewish heritage.

We must expect that there will be occasions when this reconciliation cannot be realized; the attempts to find a common denominator are likely to fail; the values are likely to be diametrically opposed so that a synthesis between them is impossible. What is the judge to do in such a situation? There are those who think that the constitutional text requires us to give preference to the values of the State of Israel as a Jewish state. There are others who think that the text requires that preference be given to the values of the State of Israel as a democratic state. I consider neither of these approaches to be correct. The judge must act rationally, he must act objectively; he must choose that solution, which, more than any other, is in conformity with the general structure of the legal system. He must produce a solution that is compatible with our constitutional history. He must produce a solution that is in conformity with the consensus in Israeli society. He must produce a solution that has links to the past and at the same time serves as the basis for development in the future.
given to the members of the Jewish people. But once a person is living here, in our national home, he has a right to equality, whatever his religion may be and to whatever people he may belong.

It has been rightly noted that the principle of equality and the prohibition of discrimination, embodied in the command ‘You shall have one law as well for the stranger as for the home-born’ (Leviticus 24:22), as interpreted by our sages to mean ‘a law that is equal for you all’ (Ketubot 33a, Bava Kama 83b) has been a ‘sacred principle in the Torah of Israel ever since it became a people.’ Justice Elon has pointed out that “the idea of the creation of Man in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) is a firm principle in the world of Judaism. The Torah of Israel starts with it and from it Jewish law has derived fundamental principles regarding the value of man – any man, whoever he may be – the equality of man and the love of man.”

The values of the State of Israel as a Jewish-Zionist state, too, are not based on discrimination against the non-Jewish citizen. Zionism was born as a reaction against discrimination against the non-Jewish citizen. After the Declaration of Independence it is stated that “the State of Israel will ensure complete equality of social and political rights for all its citizens irrespective of religion, race or sex.” A democratic state is surely obliged to respect the basic right to equality of each individual in it and to safeguard such right.

Justice Berenson expressed this well more than thirty years ago: “When we were exiled from our land and sent far from our country we became the victims of the nations of the world among whom we were living and throughout all the generations. Having undergone this bitter and wretched experience, which has penetrated very deep into our national and human consciousness, it is to be expected that we will not go the perverted way of the nations of the world, and as our independence in the Land of Israel is renewed we must take care to be on guard against any trace of discrimination or application of double standards towards any law abiding non-Jew who is living here with us and who wants to live here with us in his own way, according to his religious practice and faith. Hatred of strangers is a twofold curse. It destroys the image of God that is in the hated and it brings down evil on the hater who has done no wrong. We must show a benevolent and tolerant attitude towards all who are created in the image of God and uphold the great principle of equality in rights and duties of all men.”

Equality is a complex right. It is not on every occasion, when people are treated differently, that they are being discriminated against, nor is it on every occasion, when people are being treated the same, that they are being treated equally.

The saying of the writer Shalom Aleichem that it is hard to be a Jew is well known. It is also hard to safeguard democracy when it has to defend itself from its enemies. In one case, in which we held that torture may not be used in questioning terrorists, I wrote: “It is the fate of democracy that not all means are regarded by it as legitimate and not all the methods used by its enemies are available to it. More than once democracy has had to fight with one hand tied behind its back. Despite this, democracy has the advantage because the preservation of the rule of law and the recognition of the rights of the individual constitute an important component in its conception of its defense. At the end of the day, they reinforce its spirit and its strength and enable it to overcome difficulties.”

And if it is hard to be a Jew, it is seven times more difficult to be a judge in the Jewish and democratic State. Nevertheless, the Israeli courts have been able to deal with these difficulties. They will do so fairly, honestly, and objectively. They will do so while preserving their independence. The judges of Israel regard judging as a way of life in which there is an objective and unbiased search for the truth. Not the exercise of force, but reasoning and deliberation. Not power, but meekness. Not might, but compassion. Not yielding to or compromising with pressure groups, but insistence on the fulfillment of the law. Not deciding in accordance with passing whims, but consistently following the underlying conceptions and fundamental values of the heritage of Israel, Zionism, and democracy.

No wall is to be built between the judge and the society in which he operates. The judge is part of his people. He moves with it. I expressed those ideas in an opinion considering whether extraordinary methods of interrogation may be used on a terrorist in a “ticking bomb” situation: “Deciding these applications has been difficult for us. We are not in an ivory tower. We live the life of this country. We are aware of the harsh reality of terrorism in which we are, at times, immersed. The fear that our ruling will prevent us from properly dealing with terrorists troubles us. But we are judges. We demand that others act according to the law. This is also the demand that we make of ourselves. When we sit at trial, we stand on trial.”

For the full text of Professor Aharon Barak’s address, please visit: www.huc.edu/read/barak
returned to Japan, this time to Tokyo, where she also freelanced as an interpreter for the Israeli Consulate for visiting Israeli delegations. While in Japan she also studied the art of the Japanese Tea Ceremony under the aegis of a well-known tea master. In 1993 Schechter returned to her native New York to become an associate researcher for the investment bank think tank, Nomura Research Institute at the World Financial Center.

By the age of 27, however, she had come to a career crossroads. Her question – “What am I going to do with my life?” was answered by her mother, Naomi Sarna, a psychotherapist, who said “Why don’t you become a rabbi?” Her first year of rabbinical school in Israel confirmed that path.

September 11, 2001 prompted more soul searching. “I was living in Los Angeles and attending rabbinical school when our nation was hit. That morning my husband and I

recruiter, ‘Here I am; let me help.’ I don’t know who was more excited, he or I.”

Her training included summers at the Chaplain Candidate Training Program at the academic center of the Air Force, Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery, Alabama, and at the Commissioning Officer Training (COT) program, at the same location. Schechter also did summer stints at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado and at Langley Air Force Base in Virginia, each for five weeks of active duty training. Upon ordination, she was promoted to first lieutenant and was a reservist for three months and then came on active duty.

Chaplains are non-combatants and are not trained to fight. “The primary mission of the military chaplain is to be a visible reminder of the holy, to help people of all faiths meet their religious requirements, and to ensure that everyone’s constitutional right of freedom of religion is secure. We also serve as consultants to commanders, helping them make decisions regarding issues of religion and morale.”

For the past three and a half years Schechter has enjoyed being stationed at Los Angeles Air Force Base and supporting the Jewish program at the Vandenberg Air Force Base, also in California. Both bases are part of Space Command and deal with missiles and satellites such as the well-known GPS system. “It is mandatory that anyone who plays a supportive role during launch stay on base. My coming to Vandenberg was the first time in ten years that Jewish members in this position could meet their religious needs despite a pending launch.”

Most recently, Schechter deployed to Southwest Asia for a four-month tour in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, leaving her husband Joe Charnes and now 15-month-old daughter, Yael Emunah, back home in California. “My husband quit his job to be a full-time dad for our baby and I am eternally grateful to him for his devoted love.” Schechter is due to return around Shavuot.

For Passover, Schechter organized the distribution of over a thousand pounds of kosher food for personnel and led three seders in the region. Military personnel came from many bases to attend her seders: one at an undisclosed location attended by 30 people (8 of them Jews), another at an Air Force base for 50 people (8 Jews), and a third at an Army base for 18 people (15 Jews). Kosher food, Haggadot, and “morale packages” were supplied by American Jewish communities and the Jewish Welfare Board.

“It was a real joy having our Christian friends at the seder table with us. They were enthusiastic and pitched in to help make the charoset and gefilte fish. Several Christian members of the community feel a real kinship with Jews and love learning about the Jewish roots of their religion.”

This summer, Schechter will be assigned to San Antonio, Texas, where she will join a team of chaplains serving newly enrolled recruits undergoing basic training. “Ultimately, our mission is our nation’s defense. It is a great privilege, honor, and responsibility to take part in this. Taking the Oath of Office in front of the American flag was one of the proudest moments in my life.”

Unpacking one hundred cartons of kosher food for Passover for distribution to military personnel and for seders in the region.
HINENI – HERE I AM

Rear Admiral Rabbi Harold Robinson, C ’74, Deputy Chief of Chaplains for Reserve Matters, Director of Religious Programs in the Marine Force Reserve, and the highest ranking Jewish chaplain in the Navy, addressed the students of the New York campus on October 5, 2006. He came to HUC-JIR only 48 hours after returning from spending the High Holy Days ministering to U.S. soldiers in Djibouti, on the Horn of Africa, and offered a moving perspective on pastoral care in some of the most unlikely places on earth.

I have just come from the Horn of Africa. I was on the Swahili coast in Kenya just south of Somalia where the United States Navy is training small boat crews for the Kenyan Navy, which has been trying to prevent human trafficking between this coast of Kenya and along the Somali coast up into the Arabian Peninsula.

We have provided the Kenyan Navy with very high-speed inflatable boats that can overtake the slave traders before the smugglers dispose of all evidence of their human cargo by throwing their weighted bodies overboard to drown. As a chaplain, I was there the first time they were deployed and, traveling at 45 knots, were able to intercept a smuggling boat and save human lives.

In Djibouti on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, I met David, a captain in the United States Army, an expert on infantry tactics, who grew up in a Reform congregation in southern Florida. In a couple of weeks, David will be the military adviser to the African Union Forces in Darfur. He will be responsible for helping to nudge them from complacency and inaction to real action, although they are too small an organization to do the whole job. David will probably be the only Jew with the African Union Forces in Darfur.

I met a young woman during the war in Afghanistan, just before the start of the war in Iraq, when I was there for the High Holy Days. She had been flown over from one of the small ships to the aircraft carrier for services. She told me about how she had grown up in our movement, gone to our camps, and was a regional officer in our youth movement. Here she was, a graduate of Annapolis and a naval officer, 23 years old, doing everything she ever had dreamed of doing on a cruiser, in the Indian Ocean. She stood tall and proud and capable.

After Yom Kippur morning services, a plane was waiting on the deck to take me off to the next spot where I would conduct afternoon services. There she was standing, after everybody was gone, and you just knew that look in her eye. As rabbis, cantors, and educators, you’ll have this experience in your congregations. Somebody who hangs back, and you can tell they need you for a moment. She just looked at me and said, with her lip quivering, “Rabbi, can I just have a hug?”

There was no one on that cruiser on Yom Kippur of whom she could have asked that human question. I gave her a hug and we each cried just a little bit as I went up the ladderway and out to the flight deck. I was her Jewish world at that moment, I was home and family. I’ve had many wonderful moments in congregational life, moments that I wouldn’t trade for anything, but none as powerful. That one moment when I was able to say, “Hineni, here I am,” for her, validated all the other 32 years of my rabbinical career.

FROM THE PULPIT TO THE PENTAGON

Chaplain, Colonel Samuel R. Weinstein, C ’82, commutes between his civilian synagogue pulpit and the Pentagon, where he works several days a month in his capacity as mobilization assistant to the Deputy Chief of the Air Force Chaplain Service. He advises the Deputy Chief on issues relating to the training, readiness, and utilization of 560 Air Reserve Chaplain Service personnel, assists in developing the Air Force Chaplain Service strategic plan, total force policy, and strategic planning objective for the Air Force Reserve Chaplain program, and serves on the Reserve Chaplain Service Council.

“As a chaplain for 25 years I have had many interesting opportunities, especially in these later years as I help to shape policy for the Air Force Chaplain Service,” Weinstein explains. “I have attended Pentagon meetings, worked cooperatively with Navy, Marine and Army Chaplains, met Presidents, administered the commissioning oath to new military rabbis, and participated in military readiness exercises.”

A loyal alumnus who has served on the adjunct faculty of HUC-JIR as a Mayerson Fieldwork Supervisor, Weinstein has received numerous promotions, and major awards and decorations. Among the highlights of his assignments was his assistance in hosting the 50th anniversary of North Atlantic Treaty Organization Air Forces Chiefs of Chaplains Conference.

He recalls one of the most challenging moments of his chaplaincy, when he was called upon to be a member of a death notification detail. “Our base received word that an Air Force Sergeant was murdered during an altercation. It was the middle of the night and I, as a chaplain, was required to travel with the team to the home
of the victim’s parents to notify them and help plan funeral arrangements. We arrived in a small Ohio town in the early hours of the morning and encountering a sheriff parked at a gas station, we informed him of our grim task. He directed us to the house. As the officer in charge rang the door bell, I remained by the staff car in my full dress uniform, filled with anxiety about my mission and apprehensive about how I was going to assist a non-Jewish family. The parents, obviously surprised by our presence, but knowing what the sight of the blue staff care in their driveway meant, began crying uncontrollably. We spent the better part of three hours in their home as the sun came up, and I left there exhausted, but satisfied that I had helped this family through horrible circumstances. As we were preparing to leave, the father of the victim turned to me and said, ‘Chaplain, would you please officiate at the funeral of my daughter?’ ‘Perhaps you didn’t notice my insignia,’ I said. ‘I’m a rabbi, not a Protestant chaplain.’ ‘I served in the military, rabbi. I recognize your insignia,’ the father said, ‘but I want you to conduct my daughter’s funeral.’”

This experience epitomizes the nature of the military chaplaincy for Rabbi Weinstein, where chaplains meet the needs of people, regardless of their race, ethnicity or religion. “There are many times when I am a rabbi, but sometimes I am a chaplain who just happens to be a rabbi. In times of great need, a person’s religion doesn’t matter to me and my religion doesn’t matter to them. All that matters is that as a chaplain I am present to others as a compassionate and caring individual. The word ‘religion’ comes from the Latin root ‘to bind together’ and as a chaplain my work binds me not just to Jews, but to all created in God’s image.”

### Fourth-year rabbinical student Marshal Klaven

is training for ‘a calling within a calling.’ While Klaven studies Talmud and Jewish history at HUC-JIR/Cincinnati, he also travels to boot camps and Air Force Bases throughout the United States to learn to stand beside and counsel members of the U.S. Armed Forces during wartime and times of peace.

Klaven, the grandson of two World War II veterans and the great-grandson of a World War I veteran, was inspired to become a military chaplain at age 13, after touring the Pentagon. There he viewed the stained-glass window dedicated to the memory of ‘The Four Chaplains,’ one of whom, Rabbi Alexander D. Goode, graduated from the University of Cincinnati and Hebrew Union College. These four chaplains of Jewish, Methodist, Roman Catholic, and Dutch Reformed faiths served during World War II on the sinking U.S.A.T. Dorchester. As the ship went down, they shed their clothes to cover the injured and gave up their seats on life boats, remaining behind to comfort those unable to escape. Klaven was moved by the image of the four clergy locking arms as the ship sank, each reciting prayers from his own liturgical tradition.

“Within their dedication, unity, and understanding of a higher calling, especially in the face of great physical, emotional, and spiritual peril, there was a message that I felt deep within my heart,” explained Klaven. “I responded to this message’s call.”

Last year Klaven spent five weeks at Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery, Alabama for Commissioned Officer Training. He woke up at 4:15 am each day for physical training, and studied the history of the U.S. Air Force as well as leadership and teamwork principles and techniques. He participated in a week-long mock deployment. Klaven took the oath as a United States Officer and future chaplain and participated in the Chaplain Candidate Course, studying religious diversity and tolerance with other candidates of all faiths.

Klaven’s first tour of duty was at Lackland Air Force Base outside of San Antonio, Texas, where he sat beside Airmen in Hummers, bunkers, and entrenched positions during Urban Warfare combat training. He also had the opportunity to counsel, teach, and lead Shabbat services for a group of 20 Jewish recruits.

He recalls his participation one Friday afternoon in the Muslim jumma service, “where Lt. Rachman introduced me to the Muslim worshippers as the Jewish Chaplain Candidate. The foreign military personnel attending the U.S. Military’s Defense Language Institute from Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Yemen invited me to stay for the celebratory meal afterwards. From the most unlikely of places, within a military environment, brotherhood among different faiths and different people was reached.”

Klaven feels that the Jewish community should support service members regardless of personal positions on the war in Iraq. “Write letters of support, send extra ritual items to the Jewish Welfare Board, organize your synagogue to have a ‘Support Our Troops Day,’ anything that will comfort our sisters and brothers as they engage in battle. They need to know that they are not alone. Please keep them in your prayers and support them with your actions.”

As Klaven fulfills his calling to become a military chaplain, he also looks for strength explaining, “I hope that as the worst part of human nature unfolds before our very eyes, that God does not close His.”

[Excerpted from the article published in David’s Voice at www.huc.edu/read/chaplain]
THE CHRONICLE

Cantor Bruce Ruben, Ph.D.:
Liturgical music has changed dramatically in the last decades. These changes have given rise to a polarization in American synagogues. Some characterize it as a conflict between art and folk music, others as the conflict between performance and participatory modes of worship. This conference seeks to have a constructive dialogue concerning these issues.

In lieu of one generation bemoaning the musical expression of the next, let us remember that all of the composers on this panel were also reacting against the style of their previous generation by incorporating jazz, gospel, rock, and adventurous harmonies into their settings of Jewish music.

We live in a society in which at least two generations of Americans have had little or no music education in their public schools. The European tradition that informed the music of our concert halls, opera houses, and our musical theater is no longer part of the musical vocabulary of the majority of American Jews. There is a crisis in all of these genres that parallels the lack of direction in synagogue music as well.

Our situation reminds me of a Hasidic story: A lost person encountered another in the forest. The first asked the second to please show him the way out. The second replied, “I cannot, for I too am lost.” The first responded, “Then let us at least hold hands and find the way together.”

(From left) Michael Leavitt, President, American Society for Jewish Music; composers Sam Adler, Charles Davidson, Jack Gottlieb, Michael Isaacson, and Gershon Kingsley; Dr. Ismar Schorsch, Chancellor Emeritus, Jewish Theological Seminary of America; Dr. Bruce Ruben, Director, HUC-JIR School of Sacred Music; composers Stephen Richards, Simon Sargon, Ben Steinberg, and Bonia Schur; and Dr. Mark Kligman, Professor of Jewish Musicology, HUC-JIR/New York.

Dr. Ismar Schorsch: This extraordinary panel brings together composers of enormous accomplishment in the general field of music and in the Jewish field of music: composers who come from within a tradition of synagogue music, composers who come from outside our religious movements, academics who have spent much of their life teaching, cantors who have served important congregations with distinction, and composers with diverse national backgrounds, from Germany, Israel, and Latvia, to North America.

What is important about this gathering is that it is the beginning of a conversation between composers and cantors, between cantors and rabbis, between lay leaders and religious leaders. None of us alone has the answer to the changes taking place across the Jewish community. But together I think we may come closer to discovering the right direction.

Does a composer have an audience in mind when he or she composes or is there a greater degree of abstraction in the creation of Jewish music?
Samuel Adler: Your question reminds me of the occasion when the American composer Elliot Carter’s Symphony for Three Orchestras was programmed by the Cincinnati Symphony. Anticipating the audience’s difficulty with such a highly complex work, Carter was invited to explain his music to local communal and business leaders. He told them, “I write music for you because, as a business person myself, I know how complex your business is these days – problems with the labor unions, industrialization, modernization, and, of course, the international market. So I write the most complex music for you because you understand it.” Consequently, at the end of the musical season, his piece was ranked by subscribers as third in popularity among the 100 works performed that season!

Meanwhile, in my highly educated congregation in Toledo, we treat congregants as if we were in a shi'ib (Hasidic synagogue) and have to start with a n'gun (melody) because it’s supposed to give us ‘spirituality.’

When I write music for the synagogue, it doesn’t have to be complex, but it has to somehow talk about the text the way I understand it and the way I have lived with it all my life. And that’s why I write synagogue music, and that’s why for me it is a real religious catharsis.

Charles Davidson: I was very lucky. In professional life I wrote for myself. So I didn’t need to think about the congregation, although in my congregation they seem to understand what I was writing.

Ben Steinberg: I think it is a humbling experience when a synagogue composer prepares to illustrate a piece of Jewish text, a prayer, a poem, or something that deals with Judaism or Jewish life. Sam Adler put it very well when he talked about an audience that goes to symphony concerts and listens to fine music, yet cannot remove its classical music ears on the way to the sanctuary, where as congregants they suddenly find themselves infantilized. For me the composition of a new piece of vocal music involves study of text that takes me well over half the time I have assigned for writing that piece. That is not to say that I, or anybody else on this panel, could not sit down and dash off a tunelet. That’s a very easy thing to do. Our challenge is to illustrate texts that are very profound and in which we have been raised. My father was a cantor in an Orthodox synagogue, and before I could speak, as a small child, he taught me the modes, the nusach. I literally grew up on my father’s knee learning these things that became as natural to me as breathing.

The study of texts that followed as I grew older was the experience that gave me a humility I carry to this day. To presume to illustrate those profound Jewish words that are part of our lives is a great challenge. Studying those texts is essential. As a trained composer and closet musicologist all my life, I have tried to wed a sense of history with the messages of the texts.

Bonia Shur: I came to the synagogue not by upbringing but by necessity. I came from Israel to America for one year. As a necessity to earn money for survival, I found a job for the holidays as a music director in an Orthodox synagogue in Los Angeles. That was the first time I confronted the texts of the prayers as a composer and as a temple-goer, and I found such discrepancy between the music and text, I was stunned. Later, as a music director in Seattle, I decided in the first year to let the congregation have their music that they had had for 75 years. But the following year, in February 1968, we reviewed the music that they had been using since before World War II, in which the text and music were completely discordant.

I spent the next six months looking for prayers where the music had the same force, depth, and image as the text. This was my first encounter with the liturgy. And since then, I have always looked at the music as an encounter with the text rather than a melody. This is quite an assignment for a composer. I remember the Hebrew text Ki ein shomea tefilah ata (for you are God that you listen to prayer) when I compose. I was not raised to pray but when I write music I have a responsibility to be honest, truthful, and direct, and amplify whatever the text says.

Jack Gottlieb: Hazzan David Putterman, who commissioned so many wonderful works right across the wide spectrum of American music for Park Avenue Synagogue, repeated to me, “A service is not a concert.” He never said that the concert might be a religious experience. And that is what I try to address. When I listen to music, I see notes. That’s my first entry into the musical space. (continued on next page)

Rethinking Worship Music on a Balanced Bimah

Excerpted from the keynote address by Michael Isaacson, Ph.D. [The full text can be found at www.huc.edu/read/isaacson or at www.jewishmusic-asjm.org/isaacsonspeech.html]

Four qualities that distinguish works of significant Jewish music:

- Cognizance of simultaneous time: the work simultaneously reflects previous Jewish culture and/or learning, an aspect of living today, and creative elements and new interpretive ground that projects the genre into the future.
- The work must elevate one’s thinking, spirit, and emotive life.
- The artistic work must create a Havdalah, a separation between the sacred and the mundane.
- A sacred musical work should offer an artistic midrash, an informed interpretation of the text or idea being presented.
spectrum. I try to get beyond that to really experience what’s going on – the sense of oneness where I go outside of myself, so to speak. That is what I’ve always strived for in my music.

When my service was presented at Park Avenue Synagogue, the late Shalom Secunda reviewed it, saying “I didn’t know if I was in the synagogue or in a theater.” Maybe in those days, there was such a dichotomy. I don’t believe that exists anymore. We cover the whole wide spectrum, but there is a difference between being a composer and a songwriter. Irving Berlin was a great songwriter. We don’t consider him a composer, whereas Stephen Sondheim is a composer and a songwriter. Perfectly fine disciplines, both ends. But what’s missing now in the synagogue is the composer and there is only the songwriter who is more interested in the tune and not the whole package – the arrangement, the harmony, the counterpoint, everything that clones the sacred text. And right now I think this is sorely missing in the synagogue.

How did it achieve this elevated status? It was Rabbi Levi Olan who was the driving force behind the establishment and development of the Temple Emanu-El Choir. When he arrived in Dallas in 1949, one of his top priorities was to create a choir of real musical excellence at the Temple. So he hired a proven professional musician, Sam Adler, and gave him the charge to build such a choir. Then, throughout his tenure, Rabbi Olan continued to support the choir, encouraging it to educate the congregation musically, to stretch musical tastes, to reach out with its repertoire. Absent this kind of rabbinical backing, the Temple Emanu-El Choir could never have grown and flourished as it did. Of course nothing can be done without a music director or composer of ability. But for better or worse, the range and quality of our creative efforts depend upon the level of music that our rabbis are willing to accept.

Stephen Richards: When considering those we’re composing for, we need to remember that the reasons that people come to synagogues are very varied. But I think there are four basic elements, which change as the times change in terms of how they’re balanced: [1] to experience wonderful music; [2] to hear wonderful interpretations of the text’s depth and complexity, as explored by composers; [3] to connect with historical tradition, hear what has gone before, and relive the traditional heritage; and [4] to experience the pastoral element.

When we compose music for the synagogue, we have to take into mind the real question: “who are we writing for, and what do they expect?” Many expect the nigun, the participation, to be able to sing the music as well as to listen to it. Some people expect to be moved in certain ways by the music, to experience the joy of Shabbat or festival within the music, so I think that the pastoral element is extremely important. But as a composer, when I have an assignment or a commission or decide to write something for the synagogue, I try to balance those elements within my own mind. And I think at different times, the balance really changes.

Gershon Kingsley: Religion is something which comes inside. I believe creativity is the spiritual within us. So our creation, whatever we feel about the text, is the so-called spiritual side or God-side in us. When we compose, we are the closest to the idea of religious experience. This is creativity.

Michael Isaacson: As Abraham Joshua Heschel wrote in “On Prayer,” “Prayer is meaningless unless it is subversive, unless it seeks to overthrow and to ruin the pyramids of callousness, hatred, opportunism, and falsehood. The liturgical movement must become a revolutionary movement, seeking to overthrow the forces that continue to destroy the promise, the hope, and the vision.”
I think the best audience and the best kind of synagogue music is subversive, which means that accommodation comes into a religious experience. Thinking one thing, hoping for perhaps another. But if you are really good at what you do, and you work subversively, then you can give them a revelation. Each one of us goes about it in a different way.

But the last thing I think any of us would want to do is to give them what they expect. If you give a congregation what they expect, you’re not needed. They already have it. You’re redundant. But if you find that one door that’s subversive, one door that can reach their vulnerability, and touch them in a way that they hadn’t expected to be touched, then you’ve succeeded. Then you’ve given them a musical midrash.

Dr. Ismar Schorsch: So many congregants don’t know a word of Hebrew and are uninformed about the meaning of a particular prayer for which you are composing. There is such a gap between the text and the congregant. I think the challenge that we all face is we are interpreting a text that does not resonate for the people for whom we are composing. How do you bridge that gap? You’ve emphasized the importance of integrity, a centrality of the text. But if you have a congregation in front of you that is so highly secular, for whom these religious texts stir no thoughts or emotions, what do we do to bridge that gap?

Samuel Adler: That is the most important and the most difficult question to answer, and I think it’s a very good one for us all to confront. We have the same thing in secular music today. That is why music directors and conductors talk so much. You know, you go to a concert and Tilson Thomas turns around and talks twice as long as the piece he is going to play. Now we don’t have to do that. But I have an answer to this. We can have diversity of text interpretation, so that when the congregation sings “Sh’ma Yisrael,” not every week is rote.

In Dallas after the Friday night service, we would have an Oneq Shabbat, at which we would perform a new Shabbat work, singing it three or four times for them as Max Helfman would. I think that it is very important to present the congregation with different musical interpretations of text, to teach the congregation what this prayer has meant to a variety of composers from the past to the present.

To accuse some of us, especially me, of not being able to write a tune a congregation can sing is really unfair, because my real claim to eternal fame is that I wrote the music to the “Hamotzi” that everybody sings. They don’t even credit me as the composer any more, they call it ‘traditional.’ While all of us could write tunes that are tailor-made, I think that many of my colleagues also feel that we have to express what we deeply feel is in the text. The congregation may not know the intricacies of the text, but may be able to learn it better through its musical interpretation than just by reading the text. And I think it is important for them to know that even one composer, setting the same text, could have so many interpretations of this text.

Charles Davidson: Fifty years ago, the people in my German-founded congregation in Philadelphia didn’t know Hebrew either. Nor did the rabbi tell the cantor what music to do or how to do it. And I don’t know if today or yesterday it’s a different situation in Reform congregations, where the cantor is supposed to be in charge of the music.

Cantors today pander to the musical level of the congregation, which is not what it was forty years ago. If you took a poll of people in various synagogues today to see who goes to the opera or who listens to WQXR, I think there would be a much, much lower percentage than forty or fifty years ago.

I think that now one has to return to some traditional aspects that were the foundations of synagogue music prior to ours times.

I’ve spoken to young composers who are writing for the synagogue – a lot of them are cantors – and they say “Well, I’m expressing myself and I really don’t want to connect with things that have gone before.” I think we have to make congregations and cantors aware that there is a rich heritage of Jewish music that has preceded all of us, and that somehow in our musical genius we can incorporate that heritage in our compositions so that it strikes a contemporary note.

Gershon Kingsley: We all knew Max Helfman personally. He was not only our teacher, he was creating something new when the state of Israel was created in 1948. Suddenly, we had a renaissance in Jewish music. With Helfman as the music director at the Brandeis Institute in Los Angeles there was not only music, there was dance and new theatre too. Throughout those years, there

(continued on next page)
were music directors in addition to cantors and rabbis. But over the years, the music director position has disappeared due to financial reasons, and the cantor has taken over the music director position. The general quality of composing has declined a bit because cantors were not composers in the sense that the music directors were.

Jack Gottlieb: I just want to make a quick side comment about something that we have not yet addressed, which is the issue of that monolithic monster called the organ. You cannot carry an organ down into the congregation and have everybody come along with you. What can the guitar offer us in its coloristic possibilities versus what the organ has in terms of its orchestral quality? This is a big difference. Most of the music for composers on this panel was written with keyboard in mind, not with guitar. That is a big issue that needs to be addressed in some way.

Ben Steinberg: There have been styles associated with every school of composition down through the centuries. That’s just as true of synagogue music as it is of serious concert music. However, the style of a piece of music, no matter what approach a composer takes, must interpret the message, which has to reign, has to be supreme. The style can vary up to a certain point, but the music must retain its function as an appropriate illustrator of the words in mood and meaning, clarifying rather than obscuring the text message. It’s obvious that some styles serve that function better than others.

Every composer writes the way he or she hears. To my ear, the Jewish musical style must have a degree of dignity and must say something new about the text. This is true in all the arts, including literature, painting, and, of course, music. The composer is saying “Here’s an old text, listen to how I interpret it; listen to how I’ve written it. You may find yourself looking at it from a different point of view and seeing something you haven’t thought about before.” That’s the magic, not just of musical composition, but of all the arts.

Ismar Schorsch: To what extent is the synagogue a reflection of what goes on in the outside world? To what extent is it different? If the synagogue is a carbon copy of the outside world, who needs it? If the synagogue is totally different, then those people coming in from the outside may be unable to relate.

We need to bear in mind that synagogue music is not concert music, that the synagogue is a sacred space rather than a secular space. And there is a different language called for in a sacred space than in a secular space. I think that much of what is going on has lost that sense of difference between the sacred space and the non-sacred space, where the outside world is overwhelming the sacred space. But what you get is a replication of the secular, rather than a distinctive, sacred style, vocabulary, and language.

A number of years ago, the CCAR felt the need to write a new siddur. The Gates of Prayer had become obsolete, and the CCAR in its wisdom decided, before imposing another prayer book on the Reform Movement, that maybe they should go out and hear what Reform congregants are doing and thinking.

So they got funding from the Lily Endowment and from the Cummings Foundation for a study. Forty-seven congregations agreed to participate, some 10 to 15 congregants representing the diversity within each synagogue were selected, and the requirement was that in talking about worship they had to come to three services in succession and keep a diary. There was an ethnographer who supervised the project.

What came back has recently been written up by Rabbi Peter Knobel and Daniel Shechter, the grandson of Solomon Shechter, in the Journal for Reform Judaism. Everyone agreed that music was critical to the religious experience. To quote the words of Shechter and Knobel: “The importance of music cannot be overestimated.” Music should draw people in, not encourage them to be observers. Music should be woven into the fabric of the service, not showcased. That’s the tension with which we are grappling.

But above all, I think it is important that communication take place between the rabbi, the cantor, and the congregation. There is too little of that taking place. It is that collaboration that holds out the greatest promise for creating music that will give a sense of the sanctity of the space.
**Faculty Publications**

**Dr. Eugene Borowitz** and Frances W. Schwartz, *A Touch of the Sacred, A Theologian’s Informal Guide to Jewish Belief* (Jewish Lights). An accessible, personal guide to the basic questions of God, prayer, and spirituality as Borowitz discusses the mix of faith and doubt, of knowing and not-knowing that we call “belief.”

**Rabbi William Cutter, Ph.D.,** ed., *Healing and the Jewish Imagination: Spiritual and Practical Perspectives on Judaism and Health* (Jewish Lights). (See page 35)

**Dr. Lawrence Hoffman,** *Rethinking Synagogues: A New Vocabulary for Synagogue Life* (Jewish Lights). Hoffman’s 2006 analysis of the results of Synagogue 2000’s ten years of work is a finalist in the National Book Awards in the subject of Jewish Identity.


**Dr. Ben Zion Wacholder,** *The New Damascus Document: The Midrash on the Eschatological Torah of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Reconstruction, Translation, and Commentary* (Brill). A new translation and commentary on twelve ancient and medieval manuscripts – ten from the caves at Qumran and the two so-called Damascus Documents from the Cairo Geniza, which open a new window into the understanding of the Jewish literary tradition during the period of the Second Temple, prior to the development of the Talmud and Christianity.

**Edward Fram,** *My Dear Daughter: Rabbi Benjamin Solnik and the Education of Jewish Women in Sixteenth-Century Poland* (Hebrew Union College Press). A case study on how a rabbi used the vernacular (Yiddish) to educate married women about the laws of *niddah* (family purity).

**Dr. Isa Aaron,** “The Longest Running Social Drama, Now Coming to a Congregation (of Learners) Near You,” in *Journal of Jewish Education* 73:1.


**Dr. Eugene Borowitz,** “Understanding the Rav (Rabbi Joseph Baer Soloveitchik),” in the *Yeshiva University Commentator* (Spring 2007).


**Dr. Lawrence Hoffman,** “Illness and Inculturation: The Aiden J. Kavanagh Lecture, 2005,” in the *Yale Divinity School journal Colloquium* (Spring 2007).


*Recent Faculty Articles of Note*

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A Place of Our Own: The Rise of Reform Jewish Camping

Michael M. Lorge and Gary P. Zola, eds., University of Alabama Press, 2006

Reform Judaism is not the only religious group in America to make the summer camp experience a vital part of their effort to impart its values and beliefs to its children and adolescents, but perhaps no group relied more on camp as an adjunct to home and community for this purpose. Summer camp became an important part of Reform group identity, a bulwark against the attraction of assimilation into the greater society and mere nominal Judaism.

This volume commemorates the 50th anniversary of the founding of the first Reform Jewish educational camp in the United States – the Olin-Sang-Ruby Union Institute in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. Essays by the editors and Jonathan Sarna, Donald M. Splantsky, and Michael Zeldin cover the development of these camps within the socio-political and cultural context of American and Jewish life, and describe the educational and spiritual philosophies that were implemented within Reform Jewish summer camps.

Just as organized camping has today become a widely accepted social and educational institution in America, so too has Jewish camping become an established feature in the lives of many American Jews. In 2003 Jewish religious movements (Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist), Jewish Community Centers, Zionist organizations, Jewish youth organizations, and various other Jewish institutions collectively sponsored approximately 120 not-for-profit Jewish overnight camps in North America. In addition, hundreds of privately owned camps now cater primarily to a Jewish clientele. It has been estimated that fifty thousand Jewish youths attend the nonprofit camps on an annual basis, and an additional ten thousand individuals serve on staff for these camps. Clearly, Jewish camping is touching the lives of a significant number of Jewish young people in North America. Many contemporary leaders of American Jewry are convinced that Jewish camping experiences will contribute significantly to a young person’s desire to participate in Jewish communal life as an adult.

…The history of Jewish camping is firmly rooted in the soil of a distinctly American phenomenon: the organized camping movement. The beginnings of Jewish camping in this country came as a by-product of the social and ideological trends that enveloped the nation during the Progressive Era. By the end of World War I, an ardent group of progressive Jewish educators began to realize that organized camping programs could promote Jewish learning and strengthen the bonds of Jewish identification. It was at this very time that millions of first- and second-generation East European Jewish immigrants were integrating into American culture. Whereas many of the founders of the first generation of Jewish camping sought to Americanize Jewish children, the pioneers of the next generation of Jewish camps – camps with an explicitly Jewish ideological mission – were determined to reinforce Jewish identity.

By World War II, Jewish camping – like American camping in general – had become an accepted feature of American culture. Today, in addition to a steady proliferation of private camps that serve Jewish clientele, a diverse array of nonprofit Jewish educational camps have been established. Just as America exported the idea of organized camping around the globe, so too has American Jewish camping been a model for the creation of Jewish camping programs throughout the world. In fact, when American Sikhs contemplated the establishment of their own educational camping program, they used the American Jewish camping program as their model.

Finally, Jewish camping’s historic relationship to its American counterpart even extends to the descriptive rhetoric that has been used to characterize the institution’s overall significance. In 1922 Charles B. Eliot, former president of Harvard University, concluded “The organized summer camp is the most important step in education that America has given the world.” More than a half-century later, Gerson D. Cohen, chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, matched Eliot’s flattering sentiments when he ebulliently remarked that Jewish summer camp has constituted “the greatest contribution made by American Jews to modern Jewish life.” The zeal that Charles Eliot and Gerson Cohen share in evaluating the significance of organized camping is reflective of a shared exuberance that has characterized camping enthusiasts from the movement’s earliest days. As Jewish camping in America evolved and matured, it eventually assumed its own unique character based on the recognition that the proven successes of the American camping movement’s ideology could be tailored to serve a distinctly Jewish mission, thereby making Jewish camping a genuine hybrid of organized camping in America.
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Dr. William (Bill) Cutter, Director of the Kalsman Institute on Judaism and Health, has been on the faculty of HUC-JIR/Los Angeles since 1965, where he was the Founding Director of the Rhea Hirsch School of Education, and the first Director of the Louchheim School of Judaic Studies. In 2000, through the inspired gift of the family of Lee and Irving Kalsman and Peachy and Mark Levy, Dr. Cutter developed the Kalsman Institute for Judaism and Health, which has sponsored over 30 forums on health and healing in the Jewish community, helped develop pastoral training programs in Israel, and supervises the pastoral education of students at HUC-JIR/ Los Angeles. Dr. Cutter received the A.B. from Yale University (1959), was ordained by the College-Institute (1965), and received a Ph.D. from UCLA (1971). He serves on the Spiritual Care Committee of UCLA Medical Center and is the editor and author of numerous books and articles on literature, interpretation, and health and healing.

Healing and the Jewish Imagination: Spiritual and Practical Perspectives on Judaism and Health


Healing and the Jewish Imagination: Spiritual and Practical Perspectives on Judaism and Health explores the Jewish tradition of providing comfort in times of illness and explains Judaism’s perspectives on the inevitable suffering with which we live. Drawing from literature, personal experience, and the foundational texts of Judaism, celebrated thinkers push the boundaries of Jewish knowledge through unique, sometimes controversial perspectives. Using a modern interpretation of Judaism’s ancient texts, these essays discuss the distinctions between curing and healing, and show us that healing is an idea that can both soften us so that we are open to inspiration as well as toughen us — like good scar tissue — in order to live with the consequences of being human. Topics include the importance of the individual; hope and the Hebrew Bible; health and healing as part of the mystical tradition; from disability to enablement; Jewish bioethics; and overcoming stigma and knowing its roots. Contributors include Dr. Rachel Adler, Rabbi Elliott Dorff, Dr. Arnold Eisen, Dr. Tamara Cohn Eskenazi, Dr. Eitan Fishbane, Rabbi Arthur Green, Dr. Tamara Green, Dr. Peter Knobel, Dr. Adriane Leveen, Dr. Louis Newman, Rabbi David Ruderman, David Schulman, Dr. Howard Silverman, and Albert Winn.

The Deuteronomic Perspective

Dr. Tamara Cohn Eskenazi, Professor of Bible, HUC-JIR/Los Angeles

The perspective of Deuteronomy shapes many parts of the Hebrew Bible, including prophetic books such as Jeremiah. At a time of crisis, the prophet Jeremiah asks “Is there a healer?” Jeremiah himself answers the query with a negative: There is no healer. There is no balm. Therefore, calamities will follow. Therefore, God weeps. Like many others in the Tanakh, Jeremiah holds that there is an inevitable connection between sin and human suffering. This ideology comes especially from Deuteronomy and forms the backbone of large portions of our Bible. This ideology, commonly labeled, “Retribution,” comes to a particularly vivid expression in the blessings and curses at the end of the Book of Deuteronomy.

These chapters represent Moses’s final words to the Israelites who are about to enter the Promised Land. They disclose a theology that is often hard to swallow. In chapters 27 and 28 Moses instructs the Israelites to proclaim the curses that will befall them should they fail to follow the teachings of
Deuteronomy. The list includes famine, disease, and all other manners of devastation. According to these chapters, the curses that follow are the inevitable result of Israel’s sin, especially breaking the covenant and disobeying God. Such threats and their supporting ideology are, at first glance, anathema to us. Readers cringe when reading the lists. Over the years, I have come to know many a rabbi who bemoaned these chapters, saying, “WHAT am I going to say about THIS text on Shabbat?”

But before we toss out Deuteronomy, let’s be clear about the Deuteronomic claims. Deuteronomy maintains that the various disasters, the “curses,” are not simply natural phenomena to be endured passively. They are contingent upon the behavior of the society. The underlying presumption is that the moral society, constructed along the lines the Tanakh commands, uses its human and natural resources responsibly. The respectful use of land and the compassionate care for the disenfranchised create and sustain a healthy society. And that is what secures the entire world. When a society fails to construct an equitable life-support system, the entire ecosystem suffers and disaster follows.

Epidemics, according to Deuteronomy, are not accidents. They signal, on some level, human disregard for the physical, religious and moral aspects of life. It is tempting to read these threats from Deuteronomy as another case of simplistic theological cause and effect. Even worse, it has been possible to use the curses as another chilling excuse for blaming the victim, claiming that those who suffer must have done something to deserve their fate. This misguided theology and ideology represents the outlook of Job’s friends in the Book of Job. Responding to the death of Job’s children, one so-called comforter states: “If your sons sinned against Him, He dispatched them for their transgression” (Job 8:4; JPS). God, however, unambiguously chastises these friends for their position (see Job 42:7).

To attribute this simplistic perspective to Deuteronomy is to misread. Deuteronomy is not proclaiming a simple, individual cause-and-effect theology. For Deuteronomy, the world remains an interlocking system, governed by a just and compassionate God who cares deeply for those in the world, and who is trying to shake those of us who are part of the covenant to care and to take care as well. Moses is addressing those about to “arrive” (“When you enter the land,” k’tavo, Deuteronomy 26:1). By listing the diseases and disasters that would follow disobedience, Deuteronomy is essentially saying to those who have arrived, or who are on the verge of arriving, “When you come to the land, you have the privilege and the power to make a difference. You have arrived. Your life as an individual is woven into the larger fabric, for which you are also responsible.”

It claims that suffering individuals in our midst are evidence not of their own transgressions, but of the corporate, communal failure to build a healthy society of economic covenant. Deuteronomy therefore urges those among us who have arrived to monitor ourselves and our communities, to care and to act. Optimistically, it assumes that we are capable of doing just that.

Many of us remain troubled by the picture of wholesale punishment for the crimes of the few. We cringe at the prospect that the innocent perish along with the guilty. Yet, when we look around us, we must admit that today, as in our past, we are living in a world where countless people suffer because of the crimes of the few. The few, in many ways exemplified by those of us privileged to live in North America and Western Europe, are the cause of so much that is economically rejected by the rest of the world. We help perpetuate disease not by wanton transmission and infection (as was once the case), but because we have not devoted nearly enough of ourselves or of our vast resources to creating solutions. We have not taken responsibility.

Inadvertently and without our consent we in fact exemplify the phenomenon that Deuteronomy describes. Our ancestors explained this perspective through theological language in which God plays a direct role, and sought to remedy it by invoking the fear and love that the relation with God can generate. By recognizing these diseases and disasters as communal problems, the ancients learned to lift from the individual the guilt that is so often attached to suffering. They made it clear that the source is not with the lone sufferer, but those who have the means and options to make a difference yet fail to do so.

Maria Bamberger, dear wife of the late Dr. Fritz Bamberger, HUC-JIR faculty member and advisor to Presidents Nelson Glueck and Alfred Gottschalk. A dramatic presence in Israel, she was instrumental in the founding of our Jerusalem campus and her life, together with Fritz, reflected an abiding devotion to HUC-JIR.

Leah Fishbane, beloved wife of our colleague, Eitan Fishbane. Her memory is a source of blessing.

Lisa Goldberg, beloved wife of John Sexton, President of New York University, was tireless in her resourcefulness and personal advocacy on behalf of others. She was a catalyst for change through her singular leadership at the Revson Foundation.

Teddy Kollek, inspiring statesman, visionary, and honorary alumnus of HUC-JIR, was ever mindful of the prophetic tradition and the words of Nehemiah, “With one hand we build and with one hand we protect.” His life reflected his courage and determination to establish Jerusalem as a home of peace and harmony in the hearts of all people.
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www.huc.edu/museums/ny  
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#### Judy Chicago: Jewish Identity  
**Through July 6, 2007**  
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**Photographs by Rachel Papo:**  
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Papo’s photographs of young women expressing the ordinary amidst the anxiety of compulsory military service in Israel.

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#### Archaeology Discovery Center –  
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### Skirball Museum of Biblical Archaeology/Jerusalem

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