

# THE Chronicle

FALL 2011

A Publication of Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion

**W**ith this publication, *The Chronicle* expresses a new vision and format. Our aim is that each edition will now focus on a specific issue that displays to our international community how the faculty, alumni, students, and lay leaders of HUC-JIR are attempting to grapple both within and beyond the walls of the College-Institute with a matter of import for the Reform Movement, the Jewish People, and the larger world.

In inaugurating this new approach, we have decided to focus on the topic of "Leadership." We feel this is appropriate for several reasons. First, in devoting this issue to "Leadership" we reaffirm the broad vision that our founder Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise held of our institution when he established Hebrew Union College in 1875. Rabbi Wise believed that the foremost concern of the College-Institute was the education of rabbis and scholars - *k'lei kodesh* (holy vessels) - who could address the needs and provide direction for the Jews of his time and place. He re-echoed the prophetic assertion that "without vision the people would perish," and he was convinced that Judaism in America would flourish only if informed and inspiring leadership took place. He created the Hebrew Union College so that such leadership would be produced, and Rabbi Stephen S. Wise further amplified this vision with the creation of the Jewish Institute of Religion and its pluralistic ethos. Their vision remains an enduring one that guides the task of our school today.



We at HUC-JIR today, no less than our founders, seek to form leaders who will be imbued with the spirit of Torah while proving capable of teaching that Torah and guiding our people in view of the conditions and contexts of our day in both the Diaspora and the State of Israel. Our students and alumni must speak the language of our world as well as the language of Judaism as they prepare to address a rapidly changing Jewish community caught in the throes of transformation. Our alumni must be capable of speaking to Jews in the synagogue. No venue can be more meaningful for the future of the Jewish people. At the same time, the spiritual hunger of Jews is acute and we must not rest content to confine our Jewish passion to the synagogue alone. Nor can we guard our own denominational boundaries too jealously. Our students must be equipped to address Jews across what are already often outmoded denominational lines. Our graduates must be found wherever the possibilities for Jewish renewal appear - in the settings of Jewish Community Centers and Jewish organizational life, in the chaplaincy as well as in the university.

We must also continue to nurture the concern for equality and inclusiveness that has long been the hallmark of Reform Judaism. We proudly salute a full generation of women rabbis who have made remarkable contributions to Jewish life, and we are proud that the number of women on our faculty has increased significantly in recent years - these gains must be cultivated. The welcoming of persons of diverse sexual orientations and the embrace of interfaith families who come within the ambit of the Jewish community must continue to be affirmed. We recognize that the voices of those people who were previously prevented from participation in the public discourse of the Jewish People now contribute immeasurably to the fulfillment of the messianic vision of justice that lies at the heart of Jewish religious tradition.

This issue of *The Chronicle* highlights the many ways in which the College-Institute now fulfills these tasks of leadership. We are excited and proud of our accomplishments and those of our alumni in these arenas even as we recognize how much remains to be done. As you read the pages before you, we hope you appreciate how comprehensive are the efforts the College-Institute and our alumni as we seek to educate and empower the contemporary leaders of the people Israel to answer the demands of our day and of future generations.

Whatever our challenges, we yet affirm that ours is an ongoing interpretive tradition that compels Jewish religious leaders and laity alike to recognize that there is a creative impulse that ever-again informs the Jewish people. As the Talmud phrases it, "*Shmuel b'doro k'yiftah b'doro* - Jephthah, the least of leaders, is as worthy of the mantle of leadership in his generation, as Samuel, the greatest of leaders, was in his." Like those before us, we will continue to engage in the holy task of providing such leadership for our people now and in the future.

*The Chronicle* is aimed at all who care about the future of our institution and the Jewish and larger world. We hope that exceptional men and women who are considering imbuing their own future with meaning and direction will sense that the College-Institute embraces with utmost seriousness the responsibility of preparing a new generation of leadership. We believe that our outstanding faculty, our transcontinental reach, and our approach to learning can nurture new leaders willing and able to take on the dazzling opportunities of a new day.

The rhythms of Jewish life are a constant reminder that the new day is imminent, and that we should meet it with enthusiasm and experience. Together with our wives Jackie, Sarah, and Rosalyn, as well as our children, we wish you all a *shana tovah u'metukah* - a good and sweet New Year!

**Rabbi David Ellenson, Ph.D.**, *President*

**Rabbi Michael Marmor, Ph.D.**, *Vice President for Academic Affairs*

**Irwin Engelman**, *Chairman, Board of Governors*

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# Knowing for What You Stand: The Centrality of Vision in Leading the Jewish Community to the Future

**Professor Sara S. Lee**, Director Emerita, Rhea Hirsch School of Education, HUC-JIR/Jack H. Skirball Campus/Los Angeles

**Dr. Lisa D. Grant**, Associate Professor of Jewish Education, HUC-JIR/New York



**F**or decades, **Mr. Morton L. Mandel** (above, center) and the **Mandel Foundation** have been engaged in preparing leaders for Jewish life in Israel and the Diaspora. In 2006, in recognition and support of the important role our institution plays in preparing leaders for the North American Jewish community, the Foundation gave HUC-JIR a generous and ongoing grant for the development of a program that would enhance the leadership potential of future rabbis. The grant has been accompanied by the Foundation's willingness to also offer valuable advice and continuing intellectual guidance.

The central goal of **The Mandel Fellowship Program** is to create a cadre of future rabbinical leaders who will guide 21st-century Reform institutions towards visions of compelling community, infused by Jewish values, enriched by Jewish learning, and capable of enhancing and perpetuating Jewish identity. Starting in 2007, we annually selected a cohort of eight Mandel Fellows who were completing their third year of rabbinical studies and wished to study for a Master's degree in Jewish education at either the Los Angeles or New York campus.

To date, the Mandel Fellowship Program has had two major components that are intended to enhance the leadership potential of these future rabbis: (1) the intensive year of study in HUC-JIR degree programs in Jewish education, and (2) special companion experiences that take place through three seminars: an introductory fall seminar that introduces the themes of the Fellowship; a winter seminar in Boston that offers the Fellows the opportunity to visit and to learn from the example of vision-guided institutions; and a summer seminar in Israel that explores the challenges of Israeli society and the Jewish People through a series of encounters with institutions, sub-groups, and individuals of varied kinds. These seminars have concentrated on four themes: Vision; Community; Education as growth; and Jewish Peoplehood.

## VISIONARY LEADERSHIP

An underlying premise of the Fellowship is that visionary leadership is necessary for the creation of thriving and compelling Jewish communities and a promising future for the Jewish people. Visionary leadership presumes that leaders have a strong personal stance that embodies informed commitments to core values and ideas that are at the heart of Judaism and Jewish life, and that are discoverable in and demand attention to Jewish historical experience, our cultural and religious practices, and our textual tradition. Developing this personal stance is understood as an ongoing process in the education and development of leaders and has been at the core of the HUC-JIR Mandel Fellowship experience.



## A Rabbinical Change Agent

**Rabbi Rachel Kort, NYSOE '08, N '10; Mandel Fellow; Director of Jewish Engagement, Temple Beth El of South Orange County, Aliso Viejo, CA**

**T**hroughout the past year, I have worked at a visionary congregation in the midst of radical institutional change. As the Director of Jewish Engagement, I helped oversee our religious school's transition from a Sunday model to a Shabbat and holiday-based model that seeks to uphold the philosophy of learning Jewish by *doing* Jewish.

At the same time, this Reform congregation was transformed into a center for Progressive Judaism when our Temple community of 650 families welcomed almost 100 families affiliated with the Conservative Movement. Our congregation is now one of a handful of congregations throughout the country that seeks to meet the spiritual, ritual, and communal needs of both Reform and Conservative Jews.

Working on transformational change is hard work, but I feel blessed that in my first position as a rabbi I have found myself at a congregation where I am able to live and actualize my core Jewish values. I am proud that the work that I do upholds the goals of the Mandel Fellowship, and I am grateful that the Mandel Fellowship has given me the leadership tools and the mentorship to support my journey as a rabbinical change agent. ■

## Be. Know. Do.

**Rabbi Rebekah Stern, RHSOE '09, L '11; Mandel Fellow; Assistant Rabbi, Peninsula Temple Sholom, Burlingame, CA**



**Rabbi Rebekah Stern and Rabbi Daniel Feder, C '94, celebrating Purim.**



Mandel Fellows at the Mandel Leadership Institute in Israel.

The design of the HUC-JIR Mandel Fellowship seminars has included a variety of opportunities that enable the Fellows to:

- encounter and analyze compelling examples of vision-guided institutions, communities, and leaders;
- engage in systematic and thoughtful inquiry into the big questions about Jewish life and Jewish ideas;
- develop their visions for Jewish life at its best; and
- cultivate an appreciation for the necessity of continual reflection on and articulation of a personal stance that carries implications for rabbinic leadership.

The Fellowship experience has been guided by Professor Sara Lee and Dr. Lisa Grant of HUC-JIR with our Mandel partners, Dr. Daniel Pekarsky, Dr. Devora Steinmetz, and Dr. Jen Glaser.

### EVALUATION

Our ongoing external evaluation of the Fellowship program enables us to understand its impact on the Fellows, as well as to constantly refine the program. One important finding from this evaluation process is that the Fellowship sophisticates and deepens the students' understanding of leadership and empowers them to develop their own visions based on their increasingly informed and thoughtfully held values and commitments. The actual visits to vision-guided organizations and meetings with different kinds of visionary leaders have given concrete evidence of the power of vision as it is enacted in the life of communities and individuals. **As one Mandel Fellow remarked: "I was really struck by the optimism of the people we met. They're doing things against the grain of society. They have vision, commitment, and the ability to communicate that to others. I am inspired to create something that can address reality in that way."**

### JEWISH PEOPLEHOOD

The focus on developing a richer understanding of and commitment to Jewish Peoplehood is both a hallmark and perhaps the most challenging aspect of the HUC-JIR Mandel Fellowship. At the outset of the Fellowship year, many Fellows question the relevance of the concept of Peoplehood in the context of North American liberal Jewish communities. Our program evaluations demonstrate that their encounters with Peoplehood, particularly during the Israel seminar, are indeed transformative. The diversity of the settings and individuals the Fellows encounter - from a *Haredi*

school to a member of the far Left faction in Israel - models the challenges and potential for creating compelling forms of engagement among Jews who are very different from one another in culture, ideology, and religious practice.

**As one Mandel Fellow commented: "Our diversity is what makes**

**us incredible. The fullness of Jewish life cannot be represented by one group."**

### NEW MANDEL INITIATIVE FOR VISIONARY LEADERSHIP

The success of the Fellowship has led HUC-JIR and the Mandel Foundation to consider how this initiative can have a significant impact on broader groups of future rabbinical leaders. This has given rise to a new phase of the HUC-JIR Mandel partnership that began in 2010-2011 with a pilot program for *all* students in the Year-In-Israel program. Building on this foundation, the plan is to engage rabbinical students on all three U.S. campuses in their subsequent years of study.

At the heart of this new phase, now called the Mandel Initiative for Visionary Leadership, is the embedding of structured opportunities in the curriculum for all students to integrate their academic and clinical learning in a more meaningful way and to build on that integration in shaping their personal Jewish identities and their professional aspirations. In the Year-In-Israel, the focus is on Israel and Jewish Peoplehood, reflecting the centrality of those ideas and ideals in the learning and experiences of students spending their first year of studies in Israel. The plan for second-year students is to focus on Torah and classical Jewish texts that constitute the core of their studies and to consider the relationship of these texts to their lives and to contemporary Jewish life.

As we make the transition from the Fellowship to the new phase of the HUC-JIR Mandel Initiative, we remain committed to the belief that leadership is about passion and commitment that come from a deep set of beliefs that are the product of informed reflection about what is important and significant in Jewish life.

**Leadership requires people who are both sensitive to and willing to challenge current realities and push forward to a better future while remaining grounded in Jewish ideas, values, and experiences.** We also believe

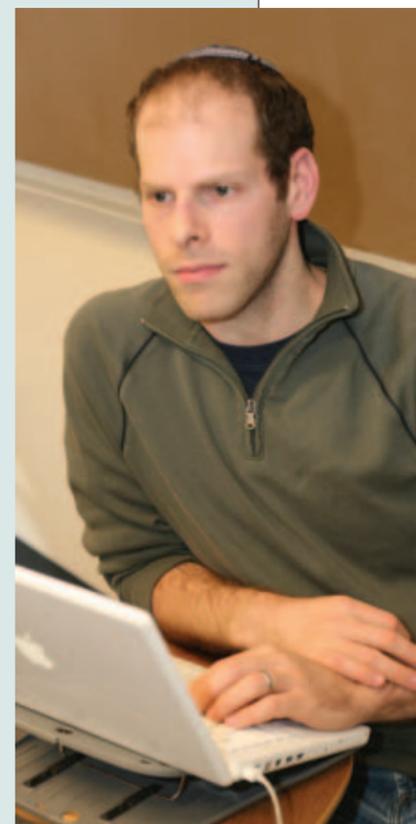
that the approach taken by the Mandel Initiative for Visionary Leadership can cultivate the habits of heart and mind necessary for the development and ongoing growth of the kind of leadership that will enable Jewish communities to reimagine themselves in order to create a vital, thriving Jewish future. ■

## A Rabbi/Educator

David Levy, NYSOE '10, N '12; Mandel Fellow

**A**s rabbis, one of our major leadership responsibilities is to act as the lead educator in our communities. We spend five years studying text, but we are ultimately useless if we lack the capacity to convey that understanding to the next generation in a meaningful way. The training for the Master of Arts in Religious Education has given me additional tools and techniques for creating an exciting and welcoming learning environment. It has become the backbone for how I view the very important work of educating and building my future community.

We ended our Fellowship year in Jerusalem, where we challenged each other to articulate what it meant for each of us to be a part of a Jewish people. We asked questions ranging from "Who is a Jew?" to "What does it mean to be a part of a people?" Through serious study, each of us made bold statements about how we envision Jewish Peoplehood and how it is a part of our lives, and challenged each other to consider who is a part of our Jewish nation. It concretized my belief in a broad vision of Jewish Peoplehood consisting of any who would call themselves Jews and live lives inspired by our Tradition. We need communities where the sense of a greater Jewish people is a part of their personal narrative. That is the inspiration I gained from the Mandel Fellowship and the Judaism that I will be working towards for the rest of my career. ■



**D**uring every site visit we met with leaders of visionary Jewish institutions. These exceptional leaders could consistently articulate a clear vision of Jewish life at its best, and were engaged in the process of securely anchoring to that vision every new venture in their communities. As one of these leaders put it: "Values are what you live by, vision is what you live toward, and leadership is how you get from your values to your vision." In each of our cohort reflections, certain themes echoed from one site visit to the next: the importance of relationship building, flexibility, willingness to always try something new (even though this also means that some of these efforts will fail), openness to move beyond what is comfortable, and the desire to always continue learning.

In our meeting with Mr. Morton Mandel, he shared with us his thoughts on leadership. And while he did certainly charge us to set "very big, very tough goals" for ourselves and for our organizations, he also explained that he believes strongly in a simple statement from the leadership manual of the U.S. Army: "Be. Know. Do." My training as a Mandel Fellow has helped me to be a more reflective and effective leader. In the first months of my first rabbinical placement, I am engaged in the deliberate process of coming to *know* my new community. Having already embarked upon the journeys of *being* and *knowing*, I look forward to one day soon beginning the *doing* of visionary leadership. ■

# The Tisch Rabbinical Fellowship and Leadership for Tomorrow's Synagogues

Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman, N '69, Ph.D. '73;

Barbara and Stephen Friedman Professor of Liturgy, Worship, and Ritual, HUC-JIR/New York

Why, overall, is liberal religion declining throughout North America, and how can synagogues flourish nonetheless?

What can we learn from mega-churches, the most successful religious experiment of the last three decades?

What can we learn from highly competent observers of the American scene?

These are the kind of questions that make the Tisch Rabbinical Fellowship a unique foray into a new form of leadership. Over their three-year Fellowship tenure, students visit mega-churches, read widely in contemporary culture, and visit with such experts like David Harris of the American Jewish Committee (CAJC), David Gregory of NBC's "Meet The Press," Richard Vosko (the world's leading expert in sacred space), Federation executives like Boston's Barry Shrage, sociologists of the American religious condition, and masters of new disciplines like Practical Theology and Congregational Studies.

What leadership *is* depends on *what* the leaders are expected to lead. Yes, leaders share common characteristics, but they must also respond to the specificity of their own institutional environment. The Tisch Leadership Initiative focuses on synagogues as the key institution for a Jewish future – no small matter, given the many critics who trounce synagogues as out of date and unable to compete in a post-denominational era. We disagree. We believe in the synagogue's transformative capacity, and wonder constantly what synagogues must know in order to thrive. It is not enough for synagogue leaders to read leading books and journals on corporate leadership in general. They need to know more about our current moment in time and place, the newest insights in intellectual thought, trends in American spirituality, and the emerging models of congregational life.

The Tisch Rabbinical Fellowship puts all this together in the nurturing environment of an ongoing think tank, where everything is grist for the conversational mill, and where nothing is beyond being said, as long as it is in service of higher truths and the Jewish mission toward greatness in the 21st century. Students are urged to develop boldness of thought, singularity of commitment, and depth of character. We meet outside of class – at the end of class days, perhaps, and sometimes, for entire weekends or days on end – to pursue this curricular enrichment. The Fellowship is constructed around four planks that constitute, together, a vision of synagogue leadership:

**1. Standard Leadership Theory:** Although insufficient in and of itself, secular leadership theory is nonetheless necessary. Students, therefore, learn basic principles and best practices of organizational dynamics – applied, however, to synagogue life.

**2. Sociology of Religion:** Since synagogues are part of North American religious life generally, students study the impact of large-scale religious trends upon identity. Part of this sociological understanding comes from exposure to the fullness of Jewish institutional life – the geography, so to speak, of the Jewish institutional map: everything from the changing nature of religious denominations to the role of leading non-synagogue Jewish organizations like Federations, community foundations, and other institutions of note.

**3. A Spiritual Language of Leadership:** Philosopher Richard Rorty holds that we make progress not by arguing better but by talking differently. Students learn, therefore, to speak differently about challenges rather than to replicate old conversations that go nowhere. They vision theologically, bring Jewish insight to bear on secular phenomena, and take positive approaches to what others see as intractable problems (intermarriage, and the generational changeover beyond baby-boomers, for example). We insist on speaking differently about the world.

**4. Personal Spirituality:** Leaders need their own spiritual moorings: attention to their interior spiritual journeys and *intention* about their approach to the journeys of others. Students develop personal statements of autobiographical theology: the truths one learns by experience, the doubts one must own up to, and the realities of pursuing religious lives in the 21st century.

In earlier eras, the College-Institute's curriculum admitted newly relevant disciplines to its offerings: first (the 19th century), preaching; then (20th century), education and counseling; and now (the 21st century), leadership. Each one has responded to its own perceived crisis: preaching accompanied the very rise of Reform; education addressed the need to transmit Jewish culture across generational gaps caused by the Americanization of immigrants; counseling filled in for the loss of natural communities, the families and neighborhoods that once held people together. Today's accent on leadership fends off the possibility of institutional irrelevance.

Every crisis is an opportunity. The very threat to synagogues as we know them illuminates a vision of synagogues as we would like them to be. The Tisch Rabbinical Fellowship is committed to those synagogues in the making. ■

## Blessing and Responsibility

Nicole Roberts, C' 12; Tisch Rabbinical Fellow;  
Rabbinical Intern, Temple Micah, Washington, DC

My "summer residency," a 7-week internship arranged by the Tisch Rabbinical Fellowship, has given me the opportunity to shadow a rabbinical mentor in a congregation known for its dynamism, willingness to push boundaries, and success in, as our Fellowship leader Rabbi Lawrence Hoffman might say, "doing synagogue differently." The Tisch Fellowship seeks to help us become reflective leaders who think differently and *intentionally* about what Jewish life could be, and about what vibrant synagogue life might look like in the years to come. But most of all, the Fellowship strives to encourage us to think deeply about who we are and what we believe, so that we can "lead from a place of authenticity." I have emerged from this process with a clear and exciting vision for my rabbinate and feel deeply that with this blessing comes responsibility – a commitment to *pursue* that vision.

The greatest leadership challenges, I feel, come from within: our tendency to get mired in the mundane when we ought to be thinking *big*; our fear of failure or opposition, which keeps us from being creative; the ease with which we lose touch with who we are and neglect what makes our souls soar. But when I reflect on what I have experienced in the Fellowship and how much has been invested in my rabbinate – and when I picture the sixteen of us sitting in a circle engaged in stimulating conversation, ritual, and worship – I remember that I am *supposed* to think big, try new things, and take the time to nourish my spirit. HUC-JIR has been the experience of a lifetime. The Tisch Fellowship has been the Sinai of that experience – a gift that commits me to a lifetime of *striving*. With blessing comes responsibility. ■



Tisch Rabbinical Fellow Nicole Roberts, C '12, (left) with mentor Rabbi Daniel Zemel, N '79, and congregant Martha Adler.

# A Tripod of Leadership Education

Rabbi Jerome K. Davidson, C '58; National Coordinator of Leadership Initiatives; Adjunct Professor of Professional Development

We are well aware that affiliation with the traditional institutions of Judaism, the denominational synagogue in particular, is under siege. HUC-JIR must now assume the daunting yet realizable task of educating leaders with the knowledge, vision, and skills to create and recreate Jewish institutions able to respond effectively to these new realities. What then is required of us?

## **A**dvocacy of social responsibility.

We must begin by teaching our students to recast modern Judaism with the strong appeal of a clear moral imperative. My own awareness of this challenge was seeded over a decade ago when the then HUC-JIR President, Dr. Alfred Gottschalk, charged me to “teach our students to be intrepid.” He invited me to create a course on the New York campus, which I organized with Albert Vorspan, former Director of the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism, in which social action would be taught as a central aspect of rabbinical leadership.

How prescient was his vision, in light of today when association with institutional Jewish life is justified by the elusive emerging Jewish generation *only* if it represents a larger purpose. A worthy mission can draw them toward organizations that are dedicated to creating a moral, compassionate society, and a just, peaceful world.

With the help of my congregants, HUC-JIR established a Chair to give social responsibility a more permanent place in the required core curriculum. The goal is to teach that rabbis, cantors, and educators, inspired by Jewish social vision, can mobilize our congregations to bring about societal and communal change. Among areas

## **O**utreach to the diversity within our ranks and to those who in their indifference have distanced themselves from us.

Encouraged by the vision and support of the **Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation**, an HUC-JIR Chair in Leadership and Outreach has made possible programs powerfully impacting our student body. Most of these young rabbinical and cantorial students bring to their studies the attitudes of the past, chiefly that Jewish leaders put the blame on those “outside the tent.” Our task, therefore, is to create a different culture at the College-Institute, one of welcome and embrace.

We have successfully begun to achieve this in classrooms, rabbinical student internships, and summer residencies in congregations with effective outreach approaches and, most significantly, through the **Schusterman Outreach Weekend Institutes**. Every rabbinical student is required in the fourth year of study to attend one of three Institutes held in a Reform congregation where professional staff and lay leadership have partnered in the transformative skills that reshape congregations into welcoming outreach communities.

## **T**raining in the practical skills required to transform vision to realization.

It used to be that rabbis learned leadership through experience or, if fortunate, from a talented senior colleague. Today, the need is too urgent to depend on time or luck.

I recently surveyed rabbinical colleagues whose administrative abilities enabled the creation of effective, dynamic institutions. I asked them: what leadership insights and managerial skills would better prepare our students at the *beginning* of their careers? The following areas were considered of foremost importance: strategic thinking, planning, and skills in managing change; varying styles of leadership for differing situations; managing conflict, “hot buttons” issues, and misplaced anger; working with laity and staff by building trust and empowering others; and financial concerns, especially budgets and fundraising.

Each of our three stateside campuses provides opportunities to study these issues, often through actual cases. Work in student pulpits, internships, and summer residencies becomes more valuable when students have also experienced in the classroom the all-important self-reflection and discussion on the values and the skills of authentic leadership.

**According to studies by HUC-JIR Professor Steven M. Cohen, the under-40 generation characterizes the synagogues of their parents in a highly critical “ABCD fashion”: ALIEN to their 20s and 30s world; BLAND and BORING, filled with a predictable demographic of the middle-aged and upper-middle class; COERCIVE regarding the views they do not readily accept, the importance of in-marrying, and unquestioned support of Israel and its policies; and DIVISIVE, separating Jews from non-Jews and denominationally Jews from Jews.**

studied are civil rights and civil liberties, domestic and global poverty, immigration, gay/lesbian rights, Israeli issues of pluralism and peace, interreligious relationships, and community organizing. All are demanding issues new Jewish professionals will surely confront almost daily.

To place this class, and similar courses on the other two stateside campuses, in a larger context, three important dimensions were added: campus-wide programs and speakers on themes of justice including, most recently, Elliot Abrams, Ruth Messinger, Alan Dershowitz, and Rabbi David Saperstein; text instructors of biblical and rabbinic literature presenting materials dealing with Judaism’s concern with a just society throughout our sacred literature; and hands-on opportunities, required for all students, to work with agencies and organizations engaged in social justice on a daily basis.

Students live with congregational families, often intermarried, and are led in discussions by rabbis, interfaith couples, and lay leaders who are effectively dealing with the difficulties faced by interfaith families; successful integration of diversity into temple life; controversial questions related to intermarriage officiation; outreach to the GLBT community and, especially, to unaffiliated young singles and couples.

Students’ response to our Schusterman Outreach Institutes has been most enthusiastic. It is worth noting that some of our graduating seniors in the past two years have deliberately chosen positions in synagogues and organizations with a heavy emphasis on the very goals of creating an American Jewish community inclusive in nature and welcoming in spirit.

**This, then, is what we hope to view in the near future from our tripod of leadership education:**

- **Young graduates will have learned to translate their moral vision into dynamic social action communities that inspire affiliation.**
- **Cantors, rabbis, and educators will be equipped to create in congregations a spiritual home large enough for our people’s diversity, with portals wide enough to welcome back those who have drifted afar.**
- **A new generation of leaders will possess the courage and ability to transform institutions, with professionals and laity working in a trusting, authentic partnership that shall thrive with renewed vitality in the changed landscape of 21st-century American Judaism. ■**

**The demographic Jewish landscape has undergone stunning alteration. Consider such realities as: an approximately 50% intermarriage rate; 43% of Jewish households are composed of singles; 50% of Reform religious school children have but one born-Jewish parent; nearly 10% of Jewish families are gay or lesbian; 10% of American Jews are non-white, as are 15-20% of their adopted Jewish children.**

# Leadership for the Reform Rabbinate

**Dr. Madelyn Mishkin Katz, RJE, RHSOE '84;**

*Director of Student Life, HUC-JIR/Jack H. Skirball Campus/Los Angeles*

**I**n my doctoral studies in Educational Leadership at UCLA I chose "Defining Leadership for the Reform Rabbinate" as the focus of my dissertation. I invited rabbis who had been ordained on the Los Angeles campus between 2002 and 2007 to participate in my research. While I knew what we were *teaching*, I wanted to know what the rabbis had actually *learned* about leadership and what impact it was having on their rabbinate.

I had three questions in mind: 1) What had they learned about leadership from their rabbinical education? 2) What were their leadership experiences in their rabbinate? 3) What was the relationship between what they learned about leadership at HUC-JIR and what they were experiencing in their rabbinate – had they learned what was essential to prepare them for effective rabbinic leadership? Their responses have set us on a very exciting and invigorating path toward reshaping our leadership curriculum.

What did I learn from my research? While they could describe their roles as leaders in specific settings and scenarios, many expressed concern with the fact that they had no language with which to shape their personal definition of leadership – and that, in fact, it would have added to their rabbinical school education to have grappled with this question.

Why is it important to have a definition of leadership? While it is helpful to teach the skills for leading and to provide models of leaders – ancient and contemporary – whose styles they might emulate, it is not enough. A personal definition of leadership becomes the foundation upon which all the leadership skills we teach can be based. It is the guiding principle by which one determines how to lead in any particular circumstance, setting, or relationship. The kind of leadership that is required of rabbis differs depending upon many variables – relationships, the culture of the institution, the "climate" of the setting, and more. Having a strong personal understanding of what leadership means allows one to know what aspect of your "leadership personality" is required at each moment.

Within organizational life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century there is great emphasis placed on relationship building and systems thinking. Therefore rabbinical leadership requires an understanding of those complex dynamics: how systems work, the power of lay leaders with professional expertise that is critical to the well-being of the organization, and the need for *tzimtzum* – stepping away and making room for the leadership to be developed from within. It also requires that the rabbi acknowledge the need to be an institutional leader *and* a religious authority – all within the course of a day's work.

I translated my findings into changes we could make in our curriculum. We have incorporated two components into our rabbinical students' leadership education on the Los Angeles campus.

My course on "Leadership for the Reform Rabbinate" encourages self-reflection as a critical aspect of successful leadership, introduces the thinking of secular leadership theorists who provide a spectrum of definitions of leadership, and addresses the realities of leadership faced in the Reform rabbinate.

We are "connecting the dots" between the in-class experience and the clinical education (internships/student pulpits) and giving students the "language of leadership" to discuss leadership and the unique nature of it within the rabbinate. This process also allows the rabbinical alumni mentors to consider their own understanding of leadership and to engage their students in ongoing reflection together.

Experiential learning is clearly one of the most powerful ways to develop leadership and there is no substitute for learning "by the seat of your pants." However, our goal is to create more opportunities – through in-class learning as well as mentoring and supervised field-work experiences – to prepare our rabbinical students for the leadership challenges they will undoubtedly face in their rabbinates. ■



**Dr. Madelyn Mishkin Katz (center) teaching "Leadership for the Reform Rabbinate."**



## Leadership Defined in a Hasidic Tale

**David Spinrad, C '12;**

*Schusterman Rabbinical Fellow; Rabbinical Intern, Temple Israel, Dayton, Ohio*

In a well-known Hasidic tale, a disciple of a great *rebbe* prepared to travel on a long and potentially dangerous pilgrimage of many miles to see his master. As he took his leave from his village, a companion of the disciple stopped him and asked, "Why are you going to visit the *rebbe*? Surely, the wise teachers of our own village can teach you the ways of our sacred texts."

"Indeed, but I wish to bring something more personal to my observance of *mitzvot*," replied the disciple. "I am going to be in the presence of the *rebbe*, to see how he ties his shoes."

Usually, the *nimshal* (moral lesson) following this tale teaches that, for one as holy and pious as a *rebbe*, no act is so mundane that it cannot be elevated and connected to God – even the tying of shoes.

But perhaps this Hasidic tale warrants an updated *nimshal*, one that offers us insight into the essence of leadership: The disciple traveled to see the *rebbe* because he yearned to be in the presence of one who had truly learned to be himself, a lesson requiring a steady fine-tuning between the person we are and the person we are becoming. As the disciple was drawn to the *rebbe*, to be in the presence of one who demonstrates the lesson of personal authenticity is to receive permission to discover who we really are.

*To be who we really are is the essence of leadership, and this is available to all.*

*David Spinrad helps coordinate Temple Israel of Dayton's participation in LIFT Greater Dayton, a broad-based, interfaith community organizing coalition.*

## Student Government as a Leadership Incubator

Julia Malkin, SJNM/MPA '11

The year I spent as Chair of HUC-JIR's HaKesher, the student government association on the Skirball Campus in Los Angeles, allowed me to put my leadership education learning into practice. HaKesher's constituents are a mix of students training to be Jewish nonprofit leaders, rabbis, or educators; they serve as a microcosm of the greater professional Jewish world that we encounter part-time in our internships and pulpits, and full-time upon our graduation or ordination. HaKesher provides an opportunity for us to work together, learn from each other, and practice partnering on causes of common interest. Organizing each HaKesher professional development seminar, campus-wide religious observance, or social event becomes a case study in how these three different Jewish professions interact in the Jewish communal sphere.

Participation in HaKesher allows us to model the professional roles we will serve upon graduation or ordination. As Jewish communal leaders, we will need to cultivate collective participation, develop deep relationships among ourselves and our lay counterparts, and nurture investment in a shared mission to strengthen the Jewish community. HUC-JIR's student government serves as a successful incubator for developing students' professional leadership. ■



Julia Malkin (first row, second from right) and HUC-JIR's softball team.

As part of the new partnership between HUC-JIR and the Society for Classical Reform Judaism (SCRJ), a number of major new initiatives have been launched over the past few months. With the support of the SCRJ, an initial \$500,000 grant was awarded to the Cincinnati campus to provide for a broad program of student scholarships and programs to enable the students to encounter and experience the Classical Reform tradition as a resource for their own personal spiritual development and their emerging visions of their rabbinates.

On May 16-18, the first annual SCRJ Institute was held on the Cincinnati campus – an intensive series of lectures, discussion forums, and worship experiences for the HUC-JIR community. It was preceded by the Society's National Board meeting on May 15, which facilitated the personal interaction of its leadership with rabbinical students and faculty and the building of collegial and mentoring relationships. For many of the students, the SCRJ Institute was their very first exposure to the Classical Reform tradition in any meaningful way; for some it was a revelation of a particular perspective of Jewish faith, identity, and practice with which they resonated and identified.

The culmination of the Institute was the inauguration of the Prize Essay Program, in which six students presented significant works of serious academic research and personal spiritual reflection. These papers will be published in the Society's journal, *The Reform Advocate*. The range of themes and subjects, and the conscientious integration of the Society's principles in each project, was a powerful demonstration by these students to their peers that the Classical Reform position is a vital and valid voice in contemporary Reform Judaism, and a genuine option for their own rabbinical growth.

Services in the Scheuer Chapel featured the first

## Society for Classical Reform Judaism Invigorates Leadership Training

ever use in that setting of the Union Prayer Book-Sinai Edition, and probably the first genuinely Classical Reform service in that space in many years. Cantor Yvon Shore, Director of Liturgical Arts, led a varied repertoire of historical music, accompanied by piano. Many students expressed appreciation for the beauty and personal inspiration they found during this service. A full shelf of the Union Prayer Books now graces the entry to the Chapel, and contemporary Classical Reform liturgy will now become one of the regular options for student-led services.

Furthermore, the SCRJ made an additional gift of \$30,000 for the purchase of a new organ for the Scheuer Chapel. "We are very excited to add this gift to our ongoing support and the broadening of our partnership," said Rabbi Howard Berman, SCRJ Executive Director. "It is a profoundly symbolic statement of the full integration of Classical Reform values in the life of HUC-JIR, and in the studies of a new generation of rabbis. The continued use of the organ in Reform worship, both to preserve the historic repertoire of the Classical Reform tradition and



## Action in the Face of Disaster

Stephanie Clark, C '12; Intern, Jewish Family Service, Cincinnati

As the student rabbi at United Hebrew Congregation in Joplin, Missouri from 2009-2010, I was distressed to hear about the devastating tornadoes on May 22nd. Having formed a strong connection to the community there, I was worried about my "family." After a few anxious days, Ariel Boxman, their current student rabbi, and I were relieved to hear that all of the congregants were safe and alive, and only a few families had lost their homes.

The congregants were shaken up and in need of their Jewish community more than ever. Ariel was scheduled to fly to Joplin that week and once she was able to fully assess the situation, she asked that people donate financially to the URJ's disaster relief fund, which I communicated to the numerous individuals and congregations throughout the country seeking to help. I was able to offer my support to Ariel from Cincinnati by organizing a clothing and toiletries drive at our Cincinnati campus. Those supplies were shipped to the congregation in Joplin, which Ariel had organized as a distribution center during her last visit of the school year. We were especially grateful to United Hebrew Congregation in St. Louis, Missouri and Rabbi Brigitte Rosenberg for driving vanloads of donations and supplies to Joplin.

The congregation in Joplin has just begun a long journey of healing. In a time of disaster, the greater Jewish community reached out and held them in a loving embrace. They will continue to be in need of this support, but are well on their way to recovery and will return to a place of vitality. ■

to inspire contemporary creativity in the composition of new liturgical music, are major priorities of the SCRJ."

Following the Institute, Rabbi Berman met with the faculty, many of whom are already incorporating Reform history and principles, as well as specific Classical Reform perspectives, in their teaching.

In another major development, the SCRJ has initiated discussions with the Jerusalem campus to initiate programs there in the Spring of 2012. This would enable the SCRJ to interact with first-year rabbinical students during their Year-In-Israel, and help Israeli rabbinical students understand their place in the broader context of the history of Reform Judaism and develop an understanding of Classical Reform principles and practice. ■

Excerpted from *The Reform Advocate*, Volume III, Number 2: Summer 2011, published by the SCRJ; [renewreform.org](http://renewreform.org)



Services in the Scheuer Chapel at HUC-JIR/Cincinnati.

# Not Your Parents' Cantorate

**Cantor Bruce Ruben, Ph.D;** Director, Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music, HUC-JIR/New York

**T**he cantorate is one of the oldest Jewish professions; the position of *shaliah tzibbur* (prayer leader) developed during the first centuries before the Common Era. It was formally delineated by Rabban Gamaliel II (fl. 90 C.E.), shortly after the destruction of the Second Temple. By 600 C.E., the *hazan* became a paid official. As the prayer book became fixed and *piyyutim* (liturgical poetry) were added to elaborate on the themes of the prayer rubrics, it became necessary to have an expert to lead services.

Throughout the Middle Ages and the Early Modern period, cantors continued to interpret the prayers. Their music became quite elaborate; prayer modes (*nusach*) became fixed according to the liturgical year. In the 19th century, early Reform leadership tried to create services that looked and sounded more like the Protestant worship around them. The cantor became an embarrassment, since the music sounded non-Western. Salomon Sulzer made the cantorate relevant again by setting the traditional melodies to harmonies and forms of Viennese romanticism. Others followed his lead and a new, wonderful repertoire combined classical composition with traditional *nusach*.

When the School of Sacred Music was established in 1948, Sulzer was its model for the cantorate. The goal was to train fine musicians who were also deeply grounded in the millennial-old traditions. A faculty was recruited that composed music that continued to combine classical compositional technique with traditional modes. Great music by Abraham Binder, Frederick Picket, Lazar Weiner, and others added to the repertoire of the Reform synagogue.

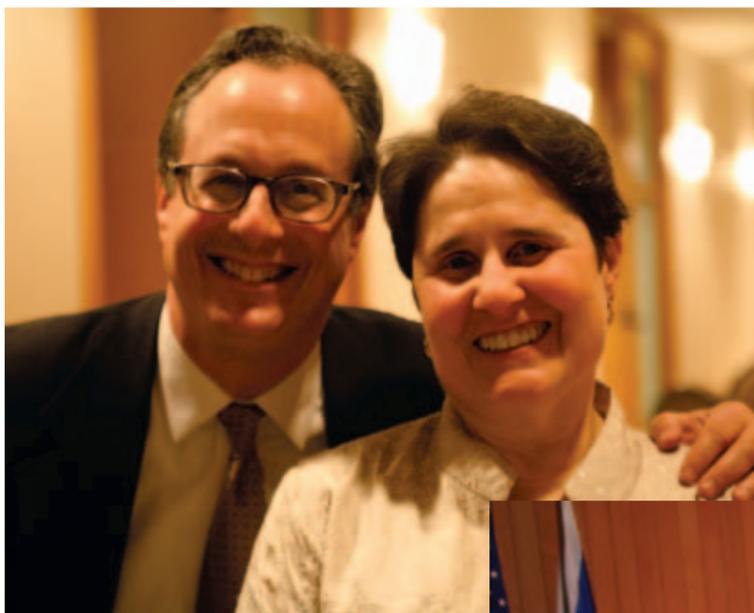
This Sulzerian synthesis was threatened as the Reform Movement took another turn in the late 1960's and the 1970's. Young people embraced a participatory folk style of liturgical music that moved away from the more formal styles of the 1950's and early 1960's. Synagogue leadership began to implement this new, inclusive style of worship. If everyone sang together, what role was there for a professional cantor?

Gradually, a new model of cantorial leadership has emerged. The job description goes well beyond the traditional *bar/bat mitzvah* teacher, choir director, and service leader. Cantors are now expected to teach students from pre-school to senior citizens. They go to hospitals to offer pastoral care, counsel congregants, and officiate at the full range of life cycle events. Cantors now serve as co-clergy with their rabbinical partners.

This shift has called for a new curriculum for our school. Under the past leadership of Rabbi Cantor Jon Haddon, Dr. Lawrence Hoffman, and Cantor Israel Goldstein, cantorial education was expanded to include a year in Israel, a Master's thesis, an increased emphasis on guitar and contemporary repertoire, and professional development. In the past five years, our faculty, alumni, and I have created a new core curriculum that furthers this trajectory in four major areas: Liturgical Music, General Music, Judaica, and Professional Development. Our goal is to train students in the breadth and depth of the cantorial tradition, exposing them to a wide range of musical styles and professional skills, taught by a pluralistic faculty representing many different streams of Judaism, at a caliber unmatched by any other cantorial school in the world.

Our students learn to arrange for bands, accompany on piano and guitar, create curricula for music in religious school, gain counseling skills, and explore their inner life through spiritual direction courses. Many take clinical pastoral education (CPE) courses over the summer. They learn to combine ancient *nusach* with contemporary music to create engaging, participatory services. They have the option of extending their studies by a year to earn an additional M.A. in Religious Education or Jewish Nonprofit Management.

Now, as the Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music, we strive to honor the memory of this inspiring composer and performer and her innovative strategies to transform congregations by creating cantors who will uplift the hearts of their congregants in meaningful worship. Come to think of it, that has always been the cantor's role. ■



(above) Cantor Bruce Ruben with composer/performer Debbie Friedman, z"l, at the "Debbie & Friends" concert benefiting HUC-JIR's School of Sacred Music, which was named in Friedman's memory in recognition of her transformative impact on contemporary Jewish music on January 27, 2011.

(right) Artist-in-Residence Joyce Rosenzweig (at piano) accompanying cantorial students (from left) Jamie Marx, David Frommer, Cheryl Wunch, Joshua Breitzer, and Melanie Cooperman in the Petrie Synagogue at HUC-JIR/New York.

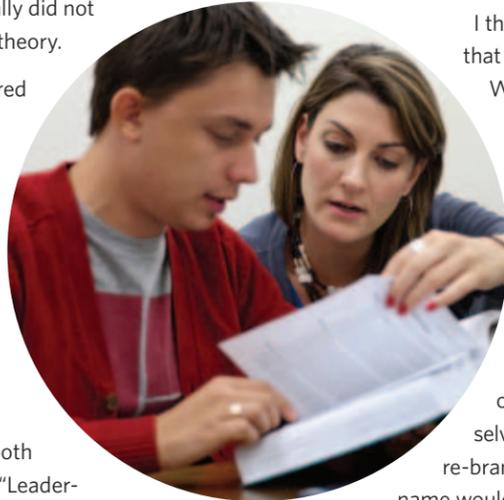


# Truth in Advertising or What's in a Name

Professor Richard Siegel, Director, School of Jewish Nonprofit Management, HUC-JIR/Jack H. Skirball Campus/Los Angeles

When I first came to HUC-JIR as Interim Director of the (then) School of Jewish Communal Service, I was hired to develop a new strategic plan, for which I had considerable experience. In this context, I really did not need to know much leadership theory.

However, I quickly discovered that "leadership" training is the holy grail of the Jewish professional arena, the paragon of professional excellence, and that in thinking about the values and direction of the school going forward, it would be necessary to incorporate it into our self-definition. Leadership training had long been a component of our curriculum, both directly in the coursework (e.g. "Leadership in Jewish Communal Service" and "Organizational Development"), as well as implicitly in the supervised fieldwork and the Mentorship Program. The question was where and how to incorporate it into our brand, the public representation of our values.



understand it well enough to value it on a resumé. So I asked: "What do you tell your USC colleagues that you are doing?" And the students said, "We tell them that we are studying Jewish nonprofit management."

I think that was when I knew that we had to rename the school. We were in danger of turning off our primary constituency... our students and, more importantly, our prospective students.

Once we decided to change the name, we then had to determine what the name would be. This was an opportunity to re-present ourselves, reposition ourselves, re-brand ourselves... where the name would elevate the brand, instead of bringing it down. We tested out many possibilities, but ultimately it devolved down to two contenders:

1. School of Jewish Nonprofit Management (which the students had themselves suggested)

Yes, it's true that someone does not need to have a large platform or abundant resources in order to exhibit leadership abilities. You can exercise leadership from whatever position you are in. But that's not what is generally understood when we talk about the "leadership gap" in the Jewish community. As it is commonly understood, leadership implies a collective with common purpose, some serious executive authority, and some resources to apply to the vision. This really is only possible once a professional has reached some level of success in the field, has had some significant experience, has achieved some position of responsibility, and has come to understand the processes of the community, the structure of organizations, and the complexities of human behavior.

So we chose the name: School of Jewish Nonprofit Management. The name aligns with a recognized professional field of practice: Nonprofit Management. And it succinctly describes what our graduates do.

However, we do not want to imply that this is the limit of their talents or the best that we anticipate from them. We do expect that our future graduates will become leaders in the Jewish community, just as so



One of the clear messages from the strategic planning process was that we had to change the name of the school because it no longer accurately represented the brand. Here we were, having graduated hundreds of professionals, many of whom were in senior executive positions in major organizations, in every sector of Jewish life, in America and around the world... and yet few people when asked could accurately describe what the degree represented. Master of Arts in Jewish Communal Service. Was this a branch of social work? Was this advanced training for committed lay leaders? Was this a training ground for people interested in social justice or social service in the Jewish community? What did the name communicate about the profession for which we were educating our students?

The name worked in the late 1960's and early 1970's when the school was founded and establishing itself. At that time, there was a communitarian ethos in American culture and a nobility to the concept of "service" as a vocation, in the sense of a professional pursuit as well as in the sense of a "calling."

The culture, both Jewish and general, is quite different now. Individualism and professionalism are paramount. During my Strategic Planning course that summer, I was surprised at how strongly students disliked the name of the school. When I asked why, they said their fellow students in the University of Southern Californian dual degree programs did not understand what they were studying, and employers did not

2. School of Jewish Professional Leadership (to which Brandeis had recently changed its program).

The difference between management and leadership is subtle. One of the senior professionals in the field summed up the distinction very simply: "Management is doing things right. Leadership is doing the right things."

It is pretty clear to me that an effective professional needs to do both. And it is also pretty clear to me that knowing how to do things right is an essential pre-condition to doing the right things.

Are we cultivating management skills or are we nurturing leaders? I hope we are doing both, but while management can be taught, all one can really do with leadership is help clarify the individuals' potential and provide opportunities for them to exercise and refine their capacities. Another one of the senior professionals I interviewed said "It's a disservice to the students to pretend that they will be 'leaders' when they graduate, since they won't be in positions to exercise their leadership for several years down the line."

many of our alumni have. In fact, leadership potential is one of the key factors we look for in the admissions process and interviews. So we've added a tag-line to our name and use it wherever we can: "Excellence in Professional Leadership." This is not simply a concession to branding strategy, but an honest descriptor of the underlying thrust and message of our program. Our M.A.J.N.M. graduates are expected to become leaders

of the Jewish community... because they are skilled professionals, are grounded in Jewish history and values, and have the vision that will help transform Jewish life in the decades ahead. ■



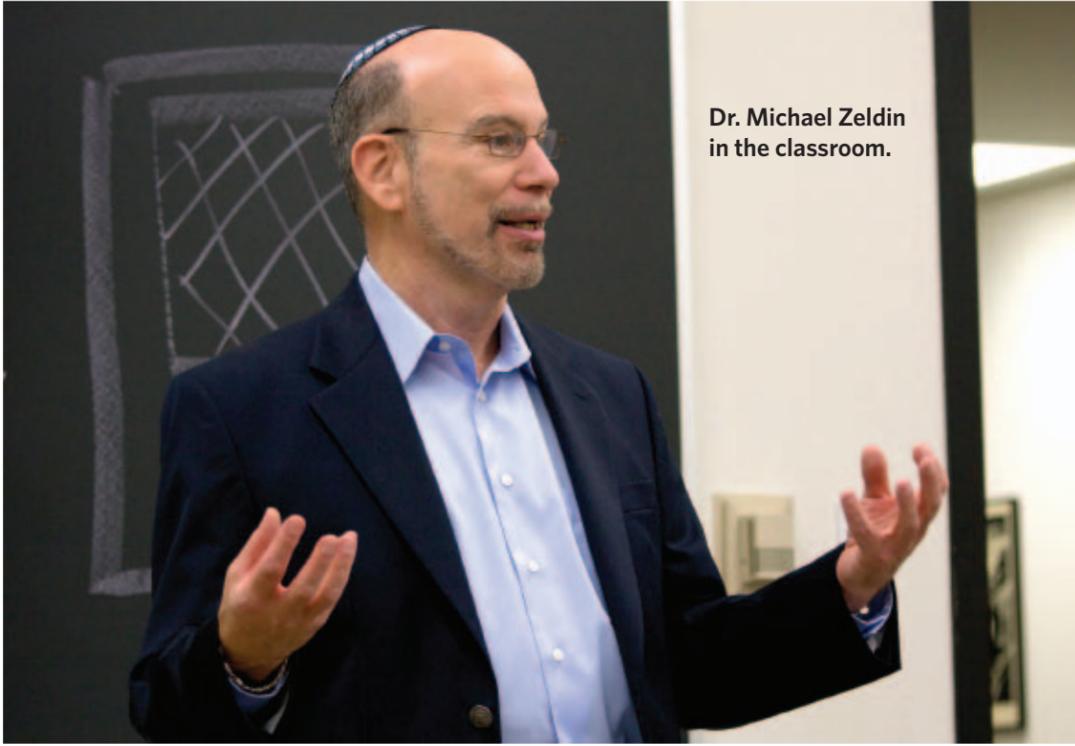
(Top) Igor Khokhlov and Lisa Berney.

(Center) SJNM students participating in a session on "Experience in Religious Expression."

(bottom) Richard Siegel (center), guiding LuAnne Tyzzer and Sarah Bassin in their research.

# Teaching Leadership in the Rhea Hirsch School of Education

Dr. Michael Zeldin, RJE, RHSOE '77; Director, Rhea Hirsch School of Education, HUC-JIR/Jack H. Skirball Campus/Los Angeles



Dr. Michael Zeldin in the classroom.

**B**efore Moses agreed to assume leadership of the Israelites in his conversation with God at the burning bush, he asked God what he should tell the people was the name of the God that was sending him. In contemporary terms, he was asking, "By what authority will I lead?"

When Marian Cartwright was working to improve learning at her inner city elementary school, Trinity University Professor of Educational Leadership Thomas Sergiovanni tells us, she realized she had to go into the homes of the children to make sure they were clean, well-fed, and ready for learning. In essence, Cartwright was asking, "In order to lead, how do I need to serve?"

And recently, when President Barack Obama addressed the nation and the world on an issue of foreign policy, he called for action that was simultaneously pragmatic and passionate. In other words, Obama was asking, "How can my leadership be successful?"

When we at the Rhea Hirsch School of Education prepare our students to become the future educational leaders of the Jewish people, we prepare them to answer the questions Moses, Cartwright, and Obama asked. Only by continuously asking themselves these questions and reflecting on their leadership throughout their careers will they be Jewish educators who can touch the lives of the people with whom they interact, transform the communities they lead, and utilize Jewish education as an instrument to improve the human condition and make the world a better place.

## What Leadership Is and Is Not

While some suggest that leadership is a characteristic that some individuals possess (and others do not), we take the view that leadership is an activity that takes place between and among people. As educational change consultant Michael Fullan says, leadership is at its heart a matter of "Relationships, Relationships, Relationships." That is one reason why so many of our programs in education are cohort-based, where students share their experiences at HUC-JIR with the same group of people from beginning to end.

In class and out, our education students come to respect their colleagues, to learn from them, and to experience the leadership that they share. Beyond the classroom, they serve in internships where they exercise and enhance their capacity to engage in deep relationships with students, parents, and colleagues as they work as fledgling educational leaders under the protective guidance of experienced mentors who can support and challenge them.

## Authority

If leadership takes place in relationships, by what authority do educational leaders exercise authority in those relationships? Sergiovanni argues that for educational leaders, authority comes in many forms. At one level, they are often the "boss" or "principal" with responsibility over teachers and children. However, this type of authority has limited effect in an era in which "command and control leadership" has lost its power. Rather, for Jewish educators, authority derives

from the professional expertise they attain by having a deep understanding of teaching and learning and the development of Jewish identity, the core activities of Jewish education in whatever setting it takes place. And even greater authority derives from educators' moral authority, their capacity to express to others in clear and compelling ways why Jewish education matters – for individuals, for the community, and for humanity.

## Leading and Serving

Some believe that leading is a matter of getting others to follow, yet we at the Rhea Hirsch School of Education teach that leadership is a profound form of service. In a dramatic shift of the conventional paradigm of leadership, we believe that one main task of leaders is to provide those they supervise with everything they need so that they can do the very best job they can do. Leaders also serve their communities, always searching for ways to build relationships and strengthen the bonds of community. And most important, leaders serve the values and ideals they and their communities hold dear. Jewish educational leaders strive to make every moment a teaching moment so that their every action becomes a way to further the value of Jewish learning.

## Passion and Pragmatism

We also teach that successful leadership in Jewish education requires a balance of pragmatism and passion. That is why education students at Rhea Hirsch School of Education are required to take a course in "Leadership and Management." As management guru Stephen Covey asserts, management is setting up a ladder correctly while leadership is making sure it's up against the right wall. Students leave the College-Institute with the skills they need to keep a congregational school, the Jewish studies program at a day school, or a Jewish summer camp running smoothly. But more important, they have the moral imagination to envision how Jewish education can become even more effective, and the commitment to bring about the transformation that will be needed for Jewish education to fulfill its potential to make a difference.

The essence of the Jewish educational leadership that students learn at the Rhea Hirsch School of Education is a combination of the passionate commitment to transforming Jewish life through Jewish education with the skills to make that happen. When students are successful at developing that passion and learning those skills, they go on to become Jewish educational leaders who will change the face of liberal Jewish education across North America and throughout the world. ■

## The "L" is DeLeT

Dr. Robert E. Tornberg, RJE, RHSOE '75; Education Director, DeLeT- Day School Leadership through Teaching

**W**hen most people think of school leaders it is likely that the words Head of School, Principal, Superintendent, or Board Member are their first associations. In the DeLeT Program we know that teachers are equally important as school leaders, not only by having a great impact on their students, but by being highly effective leaders who guide their schools to become places of powerful learning for children and adults.

The DeLeT program at HUC-JIR in Los Angeles (and at Brandeis University) prepares students for careers as Jewish day school teachers. Initially conceived of by Laura Lauder and funded by the Lauder Foundation, it currently has leadership support from the Jim Joseph Foundation and Sue and Larry Hochberg, as well as from the Aaron and Marie Blackman Foundation. While "DeLeT" means "doorway," it is also an acronym for "Day School Leadership through Teaching," indicating our commitment to creating "teacher leaders."

Recent educational publications document the importance of empowering teachers, whereby teachers "have an influence beyond their own classrooms to others within their own school and elsewhere. It entails mobilizing and energizing others with the goal of improving the school's performance" (Charlotte Danielson, *Teacher Leadership that Strengthens Professional Practice*). The DeLeT program helps our students develop two critical skills necessary for teacher leadership: a commitment to *professional collaboration* and *reflective practice*.

Collaboration is built into every aspect of DeLeT, from classes at HUC-JIR to internships at a Jewish day school. From the very beginning in their classes, DeLeT Fellows are expected to present their work and their lesson and unit plans to each other. They are taught how to give "professional" feedback, using specific tools. They discover that the collective wisdom of their peers gives them valuable insight into their work and personal growth. They are also expected to turn to their mentor teachers, their clinical educator,

# Lessons in Leadership at the New York School of Education

Professor Jo Kay, Director, New York School of Education, HUC-JIR/New York

Our goal is to develop educational leaders for the Reform movement and greater Jewish community who are prepared to face the questions confronting the Jewish community today, while also envisioning an ideal image of what might be in the future. Students learn to apply a thorough grounding in Jewish studies, Hebrew, and the theoretical literature of Jewish and general education to innovative and inspired practice in a wide variety of educational settings within the framework of life-long Jewish learning and living. Through formal classroom learning, supervised experiential learning, and clinical mentoring, students learn the importance of collaborative leadership, team building, communication, and reflective practice when trying to facilitate productive and meaningful change in the contexts in which they work.

In courses such as "Educational Leadership and Organizational Dynamics," "Professional Learning" and the "MARE Seminar," students learn about vision and culture and change theory. They learn that to inspire others you need to integrate the head (ideas), the hand (action), and the heart (care and concern) to lead a community forward. In "Teaching and Learning," students examine their successes and challenges. They learn the importance of getting and giving feedback if they are to support each other's growth as a teacher and a leader.

Internship placements provide students with the opportunity to work directly with an educational leader, while also taking on some leadership responsibilities themselves. Some internships enable students to supervise other faculty (with the support of their mentor, the school's educational leader); others provide interns with the opportunity to lead faculty meetings, conduct professional development, write

curricula, and become part of the leadership team. They may attend board meetings and learn how to navigate the culture of the congregation or organization in which they are placed. Students have first-hand opportunities to learn how leaders function in their professional lives.

The New York School of Education's Miller High School Honors Program for 11th and 12th graders in the greater New York area is a leadership training program funded by Seymour and Claire Miller, a member emerita of the Board of Governors and Eastern Region Board of Overseers. Education and rabbinical students serve as faculty for the twice monthly classes at HUC-JIR in which their teenage students meet with lay and professional leaders, study texts, lead services, and bring their learning back into their congregations. Thus, an emerging generation of Jewish lay and professional leaders is nurtured.

Whether through our course of study, academic and clinical mentoring experiences, internships with leaders in the field, or networking with and learning from alumni and other lay and professional leaders, it is our hope that our Master of Arts in Religious Education graduates become visionary leaders who are also spiritual and moral exemplars for the Reform movement and the greater Jewish community. ■



Seymour and Claire Miller established and sustain the Miller High School Honors Program at HUC-JIR/New York.



DeLeT Fellow Orly Douek teaching at Pressman Academy in Los Angeles.

**"I learned that a good leader needs to have the same skill as a great educator - to be able to see the end result or to have the vision before planning the process. The farther you can see, the more ways you can find to get there, and the better chance you have to lead congregants or students forward."**

— Rabbi Yaron Kapitulnik, NYSOE '10, N '10; Rabbi/Educator, Temple Judea, Palm Beach Gardens, FL

**"I explored texts on leadership models and found inspiration from my Jewish roots. I drew upon my teachers' wealth of professional knowledge, experience, and guidance. I was encouraged to reflect on my own leadership style to understand how I work best on my own and with others, and to articulate what kind of leadership I need from others in order to challenge myself and put my best self forward."**

— Jessica Ingram, SJNM '09, NYSOE '10; Project Manager, UJA/Federation of New York

DeLeT Fellow Jacob Hall teaching a 6th-grade government class at Stephen S. Wise Elementary School in Los Angeles.



and their instructors for feedback. Over time, they learn that this "professional network" of "critical friends" is absolutely essential to their success in the classroom. It is also truly amazing when they inevitably find themselves, late in the year, serving as "critical friends" to their mentors who value their views as colleagues!

A related skill/concept that Fellows practice daily in DeLeT is reflective practice. On the very first day of the program, they are introduced to language that promotes reflection and they practice it in classes, in *t'filah*, when they teach "model" lessons to their peers, everywhere. Their teachers at HUC-JIR model reflective behavior when they teach them and their mentors do the same when they talk with the Fellows about their observations. Typically, when students enter the program they understand reflection to mean "What should I have done differently?" We carefully help them begin to think about it, instead, as "What did I learn from this experience?" based on the belief that leaders look forward rather than backward. ■

# Authoring, Authority, and Authenticity: The Storying of Jewish Education

Rabbi Tali Zolkowicz, Ph.D., RHSOE '00, L '02;

Professor Sara S. Lee Chair for an Emerging Scholar in Jewish Education, HUC-JIR/Jack H. Skirball Campus/Los Angeles

**M**any of us have inherited an overarching and often unconscious master narrative, which I refer to as the “Humpty Dumpty Narrative.” With uncanny precision, it echoes contemporary American Jewish communal anxieties about qualitative and quantitative survival:

## **Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall -**

*There was a putatively whole, “authentic” place where Jews once lived and belonged (Europe - the master narrative is thoroughly Ashkenazic).*

## **Humpty Dumpty had a great fall -**

*Leaving Europe for America, and shifting homebase to new shores, may even represent the “sin” of Jewish modernity.*

## **But all the King’s horses and all the King’s men could not put Humpty together again.**

*American culture and ideology have driven an unnatural and unholy wedge down the middle of a once-integrated Jewish life, leaving Jews and “Jewishness” bifurcated between ethnic and religious dimensions, hyphenated, truncated, and episodic. In short, American Jewish identities are broken in pieces. And now, all the Jewish educators and all the Jewish professionals, cannot seem to put Jewish life back together again in America.*

My graduate students are rejecting Humpty’s tragic story of loss and wondering how change processes and the politics of authenticity surrounding Jewish identity formation might limit new questions we could be asking about Jewish education. In class we are learning to ask: How can we as Jewish educators navigate multiple and competing definitions of authenticity? How do we relate and respond to the boundary pushing? In other words, how do we make explicit and transparent some of the stories Jews, lay and professional alike, tell about themselves? How are authenticity constructed and authority legitimized? And ultimately, which versions of Jewish identity formation are deemed good, strong, correct, and generative, by whom, and why?

Here’s one way we’re experimenting: our students identify one artifact of contested authenticity - something that pushes their Jewish boundaries in a controversial, threatening, or problematic way - then they analyze and examine their own personal and professional strategies for how they might address this boundary pushing.



Examples of such artifacts could include: Hal-loveen books featured in a Jewish school library; the canine ritual of “bark *mitzvah*”; an article extolling the virtues of intermarried clergy; the text of a blessing offered to all the non-Jewish spouses during High Holy Day services by the senior rabbi; or a YouTube excerpt of Rabbi Funye Capers leading his African-American congregation in Shabbat services in Chicago.

Our students’ fascinating range of authenticity artifacts include a UCSD Hillel campus promotional condom that reads, “Israel: It’s still safe to come,” to a “Zen Seder” Haggadah from a group of “JuBu’s,” to the Red Kabbalah string, to tattoos with Jewish themes (Star of David, a *chai*, Hebrew word *Shalom*, etc.).

I ask the students to bring to class responses to these questions:

- What is the advertent and/or inadvertent purpose (religious, physical, sociological) of the artifact?
- What boundaries does it push? How, for whom, and why?
- What questions, feelings, and dilemmas does this artifact raise for you, personally?
- How, as a Jewish educational professional, do you relate to this artifact? Where do you draw the boundaries and how might you communicate this stance to a group of congregants, learners, campers, or colleagues?

Faculty provide critical responses to the students’ treatment of the artifacts, leading to a discussion of the difference between “inauthentic” and “kitsch.” There is frustration as well as appreciation for the lack of definitive answers in the ongoing drama about what constitutes authentic, authoritative identity formation, and who gets to author it. One student imagines bringing such an “authenticity inquiry” to her classroom,

where her own seventh-grade students would identify things that seem marginal or on the boundaries.

Each generation’s leaders must accept their authorial power to write new culture responsibly, which is connected to our rich and varied past and simultaneously rooted in the ethical, social, and cultural realities of the day. As Jewish educators, they must continually define what it means to be a part of, and apart from, America. But too often, Jewish leaders get caught up in reinforcing unproductive strategies that merely polarize the differences between defensive survivalists, on the one hand, who gird their armor against change and loss, and daring transformationalists, on the other, who do not call change loss, but seek it out precisely as a mode of regeneration.

Liberal Jews want their boundaries to be porous, but not too porous. An orienting metaphor of porosity emerged in class that applies well to the social-scientific study of Jewish identity formation as a whole: Dr. Rachel Adler’s metaphor of a living cell, with a semipermeable membrane. A cell has a way to let things in from the outside and to let things out from the inside, without being inundated or losing its integrity.

Words, metaphors, and narratives all shape our understanding of the past and the present, and our vision for the future. Through such stories and narrative, we uncover the fluid nature of the field - how it changes and how all the stakeholders in the field of Jewish education - educators, students, parents, institutional leaders, and philanthropists - are responsible for authoring or reinterpreting our story.

Revised from an article published in *Sh’ma: A Journal for Jewish Responsibility* (March 2010). ■

Rabbi Josh Zweiback teaching Year-In-Israel students at HUC-JIR/Jerusalem



## Engaging Israel – Deepening the Encounter for Our First-Year Students

**Rabbi Josh Zweiback, RHSOE '96, N '98; Director, Year-In-Israel Program, HUC-JIR/Jerusalem**

The last word of the Torah is *Yisrael*. The first word is *B'reisheet*. When we complete our public reading of our People's central text, we immediately begin again. On Simchat Torah, the last word and the first word are joined – *Yisrael b'reisheet* ("Israel first" or even "In the beginning: Israel"). Wearing my Director of the Year-In-Israel program *kippah*, I must say I very much like this subtle teaching of *Simchat Torah*!

All of our rabbinical, cantorial, and Jewish education students begin their HUC-JIR training in Israel on our Jerusalem campus. Here they learn Hebrew, study Bible and Rabbinics, absorb the history of the Biblical and Second Temple periods in the place it happened, and, perhaps most powerfully, explore their relationships with the land, state, and people of Israel.

Israel studies forms a significant part of the formal curriculum of the Year-In-Israel program. Wednesdays throughout the year are reserved for our Israel Seminar. Tuesday afternoons provide the context as we study the history of the Zionist movement, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and contemporary world Jewry. This coming year, in partnership with the Mandel Foundation, our Israel studies program will include two study trips – *tiyulim* – focused on the themes of Israel

and Jewish Peoplehood. Monthly inquiry groups integrated into our Israel Seminar (and also developed in partnership with and partially funded by the Mandel Foundation) give students the opportunity to reflect deeply and regularly on essential questions that should inform a mature, thoughtful relationship with Israel. Our mid-year colloquium – an intensive three days of inquiry and exploration led by HUC-JIR faculty and guest lecturers – gives students the opportunity to connect Israel as a theme with God and Torah, the two other pillars of Jewish thought.

Our informal curriculum includes our *T'ruma* projects, which enable students to contribute by volunteering at organizations in Jerusalem and its environs; our Parallel Lives Program, which connects HUC-JIR students with a group of IDF soldiers for a series of conversations about Israel, Judaism, and Jewish Peoplehood; and dozens of other extra-curricular opportunities that expose our students to a diverse range of viewpoints about Israel, Jewish life, the role of the Jewish professional, Israel-Diaspora relations, and our obligations to the non-Jewish "other" in our midst.

Perhaps the simplest and most powerful way the College-Institute encourages Israel engagement is in

its requirement that all of our future rabbis, cantors, and Jewish educators spend a year living and learning in Israel. Over the course of this year – through curriculum both formal and informal, planned and unplanned – our students engage with the State of Israel and its inhabitants in sustained and, we hope, deep ways. Whether inside the classroom or in conversations with taxi-drivers or neighbors, our students explore their commitment to Israel as a place and as a People.

The last letter of the last word of Torah is *lamed*. The first letter of the first word is *bet*. *Lamed-bet* spells "lev," which means heart. While much of the Year-In-Israel program is designed to stimulate the mind, we understand that our curriculum must touch the heart as well. We are not just an academy of higher learning. We are also a seminary that endeavors to inspire in its graduates a deep, enduring, and mature love for Israel. This is why this program is as intense as it is and it's why the program needs to happen here, in Israel. A lasting, significant, meaningful love requires patience, time for reflection as well as play, and lots of hard work. Our students' Year-In-Israel is the beginning – we hope – of a lifelong love affair with our homeland, our Torah, our People, and our God. ■

## From Theory into Practice: The Advanced M.A. Program for Pluralistic Jewish Education

**Dr. Michal Muszkat-Barkan, Director, Department of Education and Professional Development, HUC-JIR/Jerusalem**



**Dr. Michal Muszkat-Barkan**

Who will be Israel's future educational leaders and how can educational leadership be developed? What are the characteristics of the process that can support the growth of visionary educational leadership?

In Israel, pluralism is not well understood as an educational approach, although the term is being increasingly employed in a variety of settings and by a range of different institutions. We have become convinced that if we wish to promote pluralism it is not enough to be engaged in advocacy. We need to get involved in the educational system and offer a way of nurturing a new generation of educational leadership.

The Advanced Program for Pluralistic Jewish Education is our joint venture with the Melton Centre for Education of the Hebrew University, which grants the M.A. degree in Jewish Education. The aim of the program is to train leading educators to deal with the challenges of Pluralistic Jewish Education in Israel. It combines academic studies with experiential and reflective group learning.

Currently, two cohorts of the program have completed their 2-year studies (with a total of 22 students), and the third cohort is expected to start this academic year.

The first principle of the program is to acquire **acquaintance with current thought and issues in Jewish education**. In order to formulate clear goals, for themselves and for others, educational leaders need to be knowledgeable regarding Jewish educational thinking in all its diversity. Therefore, a major portion of the program is aimed at gaining familiarity with contemporary issues in Jewish education, including peoplehood, Jewish identity, and curriculum planning.

One central component of the program is the concept of pluralism. We work with our students on the theoretical underpinnings of this concept, and they have an opportunity to study with leading researchers and teachers in Jewish education. Acquiring and expanding one's acquaintance with the Jewish educational world is expected to enable educational leaders to design vision and to cope with the challenges of a complex and rapidly changing Jewish world. The program provides a theoretical and practical basis for the educational study of the concept of pluralism, through study with leading researchers in the field of Jewish education.

The second principle of the program is to encourage the students to frame their own **educational vision**. One of the central expectations of educational leadership is the ability to see the connection between one's values and goals and the actions necessary in order to accomplish these goals. This includes examination of alternatives

(continued on next page 29)

**The students are invited to read, raise questions, and investigate the environments in which they themselves are situated.**

# What Kind of Rabbis Does Israel Need?

**Rabbi Marc Rosenstein, Ph.D., N '75;** Director, Israel Rabbinical Program, HUC-JIR/Jerusalem

**F**or over a century, the educators and cultural leaders of the Yishuv and later of the State of Israel have been struggling to define the ideal of the Jew who would build – and sustain – a renewed Jewish national existence in the Land of Israel. For a long time the voice of our Movement was not much heard in this conversation. We were marginal, perceived as an import, our rabbis speaking for the most part with pretty heavy American accents.

But times have changed. We are still a small Movement, but we are known. We have congregations across the land and some large and well-respected institutions, including Bet Daniel in Tel Aviv and Leo Baeck in Haifa. Our Center for Religious Pluralism often makes the news and has impact in the courts and on the street. And for three decades, we have been ordaining Israeli rabbinical leaders for Israeli society. For the last two of those years, as Director of the Israel Rabbinical Program at HUC-JIR/Jerusalem, I have found the challenge of defining the ideal of the rabbi that is appropriate to Israeli society in our time to be fascinating, exciting, and as yet unresolved.

Traditionally, the rabbi's authority, based on his knowledge, piety, and understanding of the needs of his flock, was centered in his interpretation – and determination – of Jewish law. He was a legal authority for the community; his influence thereby touched every aspect of their lives. But in Israel (outside of the Orthodox world) – and in Reform Judaism anywhere – most Jews today are not concerned with what Halachah requires of them.

In modern liberal Judaism, the rabbi is less a decisor than a teacher, the one who helps her community find meaning, moral values, and personal solace in the Jewish experience and in Jewish sources; she is a repository of knowledge, a counselor, a leader of institution-building and social change. But in Israel, the baseline of Jewish culture and identity – Hebrew, Bible, Jewish history, holidays, Hebrew literature – is already there on the street and in the public schools; no one needs a rabbi for her knowledge of Hebrew. No one needs a synagogue to provide a Jewish anchor or environment; the street is a Jewish environment.



So what is the niche for the Reform rabbi in Israel? I don't believe there is one right answer. Here are a few possibilities:

- Spiritual and educational leader of a synagogue-based community, seeking to take Judaism back from the state and the street and build an intimate community informed by Jewish texts and driven by Jewish values.
- Leader in the wider society who brings Reform's pluralistic and prophetic approach to building the Jewish state – in politics, education, and civil society.
- Jewish scholar in academia who can bridge the gap between the ivory tower and the challenge of applying the wisdom of Jewish sources to the needs of a real Jewish state.
- Entrepreneur, gadfly, informal educator, social activist, thinker-outside-the-box, who can create for herself an as-yet-untried channel for bringing liberal Judaism to

bear on the challenge of realizing the vision of the Jewish state.

So, whom should we recruit and how should we train them, and how can we attract candidates when their options after ordination are so unknown? Not easy questions. And yet, we do attract candidates, and we do train them – and we continue to model adaptive leadership: constantly reflecting on what we are doing and how we are doing it, and trying to help each student discover his own unique role and mission in the perfection of the Jewish state. The State of Israel is the opportunity we Jews have to show the world what we can do and how we apply our values when we finally have sovereignty, political power, and military might. Reform leaders – and those who train them – have a critical responsibility to make sure that the result of this experiment is *tikkun olam*, and the sanctification of God's name. ■

## Impossible Challenge: From Dream to Reality

**Rabbi Judith Edelman-Green, J '09**

*Rabbi Judith Edelman-Green, M.A., was ordained at HUC-JIR/Jerusalem in 2009. She founded and directed Israel's national program of Bar/Bat Mitzvah for the Special Child for 12 years; initiated Israel's first overnight camp for young adults with special needs; and organized Israel's first national conference on Jewish Special Education that brought together teachers, parents, rabbis, and children.*



**M**y rabbinical work involves creating something from nothing. A group of parents and I are attempting to create a community for adults with special needs included within the wider community. It will be the first of its kind, based around a synagogue, good deeds, giving to the community, and a *beit midrash* without books for those who cannot read. We are working to build an inclusive, pluralistic home of satellite apartments around a community center for 70 adults above the age of 21 with developmental disabilities, autism, and deafness. We will create work opportunities with self-respect and meaning. Our goal is to use the model of a thriving Jewish community so that people will experience belonging, giving, and caring. Our residents will experience empowerment by being leaders themselves.

As a second-year student at HUC-JIR, just five years ago, my studies enabled me to dare to attempt the impossible. I consulted with teachers about the genesis of this project. Their belief in me was not necessarily based on my past work with those with special needs, but on a deep reading of the texts and belief in the invisible and impossible, a belief in social change.

In September we are starting a parents' group based on my final project at rabbinical school, and we will discuss Jewish sources which deal with separation and anxiety and engage in creative activities to face this challenge. We are also starting a social group for the young adults themselves, to prepare for *Shabbat* and for independence in life. I will begin receiving a salary this month for the first time. We have been granted 2 acres of land, several government offices are engaged, and we have 70 believing families on our books. We have a website, architectural plans, and many helping hands. We are a community that is becoming. [rimon.org.il](http://rimon.org.il) ■

# Cincinnati Graduation/Ordination



**Rabbi Marc Saperstein, Ph.D., N '72; Principal, Leo Baeck College, Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters recipient;**  
Cincinnati Graduation Address, May 19, 2011

What is the state of health of the sermon today? My sense is that we have moved back to the model of the early 19th century with a sermon expected to educate, edify, and entertain, not to provoke and disturb. Perhaps one reason is that the tradition of prophetic condemnation of social injustice is so widely available in the opinion pieces of our newspapers and other media, where pundits and politicians and would-be prophets weigh in day after day, that the rabbi's role in speaking out on controversial social issues may seem superfluous. But should rabbis be content to speak only about the *parashah* and 'stick to religion,' while avoiding the issues that most deeply trouble our society? Is it an abuse of the rabbinical position to take a strong stand from the pulpit on a matter of controversy and contention? While we are certainly not prophets or the children of prophets, personally I believe it is an abnegation of an important component of the role of the Progressive Rabbi to abandon the prophetic role that is indeed taken up so impressively by many of our Christian colleagues. ▶▶▶▶ [huc.edu/gradord/11/cngrad](http://huc.edu/gradord/11/cngrad)



1



2



- 1. Ph.D. recipients.
- 2. Pre-Doctoral M.A. in Jewish Studies recipients.
- 3. The rabbinical class of 2011.
- 4. Graduation at Isaac M. Wise Temple.



3

**Rabbi Edward Goldman, C '69, Ph.D. '74; Bettan Chair Emeritus in Midrash and Homiletics, HUC-JIR/Cincinnati,** Cincinnati Ordination Address, May 21, 2011

Although one's character is a *sine qua non* for the rabbinate, Ordination itself is the ultimate source of rabbinic authority. Earlier I traced the chain of rabbinic authority back to Moses. But it is incumbent upon each individual ordinee to bring personal content to the title Rabbi. Each of you has studied long and hard. You have grappled with questions of philosophy and theology, meaning and purpose. You have mastered significant portions of our tradition, and are eager to share what you have learned. But you also know how much can yet be learned. Ordination is a beginning, not an end. It is the beginning of one's shaping of his or her rabbinate. We who represent your *alma mater* hope that your rabbinates will be characterized by continued study and learning, no longer to fulfill assignments and pass courses, but because the act of studying is not only a privilege but a religious obligation. My teacher, Rabbi Eugene Mihaly, z"l, used to refer to Torah study as "praying the text." I hope you will zealously leave time in your lives to "pray the text." We study, not out of a sense of antiquarian interest, but rather to bring classic Jewish texts to bear on our own experiences. Through study, we engage in an ongoing dialogue with the text.

▶▶▶▶ [huc.edu/gradord/11/cnord](http://huc.edu/gradord/11/cnord)



# Honorary Doctors of Humane Letters



(from left:) **Cincinnati Graduation:**

- 1. **Thomas G. Cody**, Retired Vice Chairman, Macy's Inc.;
- 2. **Professor Samuel Greengus, Ph.D.**, Morgenstern Professor Emeritus of Bible and Near Eastern Literature, HUC-JIR/Cincinnati;
- 3. **Reverend Damon Lynch, Jr.**, Pastor, New Jerusalem Baptist Church, Cincinnati;
- 4. **Rabbi Michael Morgan, Ph.D.**, Chancellor's Professor Emeritus of Philosophy and Jewish Studies, Indiana University;
- (pictured at top of this page) **Rabbi Marc Saperstein, Ph.D.**, Graduation Speaker; Principal, Leo Baeck College

**Los Angeles Graduation:**

- 5. **Howard I. Friedman**, Chair, Skirball Cultural Center; National Civic Leader; ■ (see page 16) **C. L. Max Nikias, Ph.D.**, Graduation Speaker; President, University of Southern California

**New York Graduation:**

- 6. **Barbara B. Dobkin**, Chair, Board of Trustees, American Jewish World Service; Founder, Ma'yan, The Jewish Women's Project; Founding Chair, The Jewish Women's Archive; Founding Chair, Hadassah Foundation;
- 7. **Jack Gottlieb, D.M.A., z"l**, Posthumously; Composer and Professor of Music, The Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music, HUC-JIR/New York; ■ (see page 17) **Rabbi Arthur Green, Ph.D.**, Graduation Speaker; Irving Brudnick Professor of Jewish Philosophy and Religion and Rector, Rabbinical School, Hebrew College;
- 8. **Rabbi Leonard S. Kravitz, Ph.D.**, Professor of Midrash and Homiletics, HUC-JIR/New York;
- 9. **Phillip E. Miller, Ph.D.**, Director Emeritus, The Klau Library, HUC-JIR/New York

# Los Angeles Graduation/Ordination

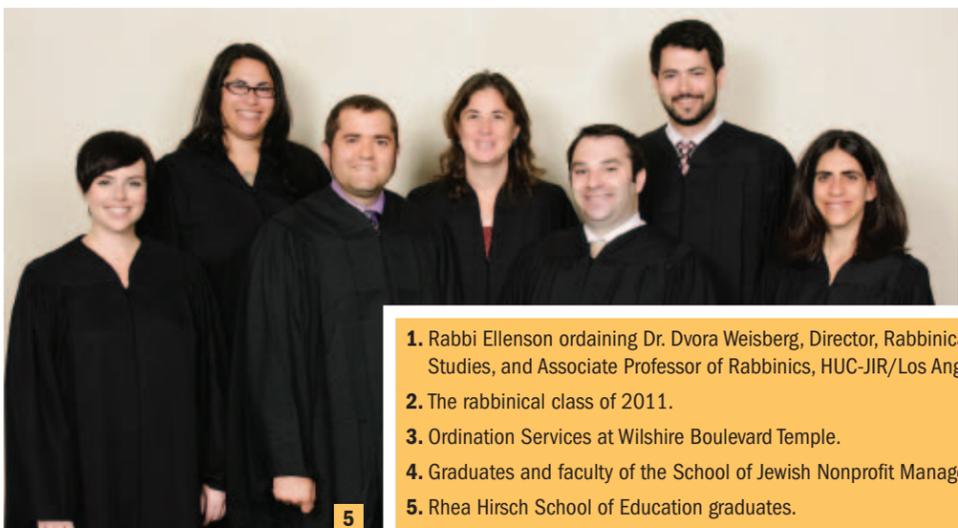
**Rabbi David Ellenson, Ph.D., N '77; President, HUC-JIR, Los Angeles Ordination Address, May 15, 2011**

As you prepare for your ordination as rabbi, I would remind you that you are the newest link in the chain of Jewish tradition that unites our people throughout history. As a rabbi, you are called upon to devote yourselves to God and the people Israel. Here Rabbi Leo Baeck should serve as your inspiration. The last duly-elected leader of the German Jewish community during the Shoah, Rabbi Baeck personally arranged for thousands of European Jews to escape during those years. Yet he refused to leave his people and abandon his post during their time of distress. He was ultimately incarcerated in Theresienstadt, where three of his sisters perished and where he continued as rabbi to minister and teach all prisoners – Jewish and gentile. The integrity Rabbi Baeck displayed remains a model of rabbinical leadership to which you must aspire as you embark upon your career.



**C.L. Max Nikias, Ph.D., President, University of Southern California, Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters recipient; Los Angeles Graduation Address, May 16, 2011**

You have committed yourself to the adventure of learning. That adventure continues through the decades, and it ends only with our last breath. I know you have learned much here, within a religious tradition that places learning as its unshakable foundation. At this great institution, your mind and your conscience have been fed and energized by the discussion of the most timeless truths of the human experiment. But in the grand tradition of Jewish scholarship and inquiry, this lively discussion is renewed each new morning through the years, with each new day bringing deeper insight into timeless truths, and with each truth leading to timely advances for ourselves and our children. Let us cherish this unending struggle for truth, which the Jewish tradition has infused wonderfully into our world, as each of us comes to understand who we are, as human beings in society, and as persons with a timeless heritage that offers something timely today and tomorrow. May you be bold in your struggle for perspective and for hope and for truth. May you be tireless and resilient in working alongside others in the service of *tikkun olam* as you strengthen and heal a broken world that desperately needs your contribution. And may you all seize the mighty destiny that awaits you. ▶▶▶▶ [huc.edu/gradord/11/lagrad](http://huc.edu/gradord/11/lagrad)



- 1. Rabbi Ellenson ordaining Dr. Dvora Weisberg, Director, Rabbinical Studies, and Associate Professor of Rabbis, HUC-JIR/Los Angeles.
- 2. The rabbinical class of 2011.
- 3. Ordination Services at Wilshire Boulevard Temple.
- 4. Graduates and faculty of the School of Jewish Nonprofit Management.
- 5. Rhea Hirsch School of Education graduates.

# New York Graduation/Ordination/Investiture



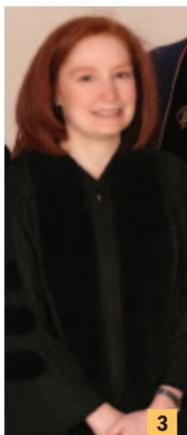
**Rabbi Arthur Green, Ph.D., Irving Brudnick Professor of Jewish Philosophy and Religion and Rector, Rabbinical School, Hebrew College, Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters recipient;** New York Graduation Address, May 5, 2011

As a religious Jew, I believe that we ever stand beneath that mountain, saying "Yes! We will do and listen!" to the voice that commands us to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. That priesthood encompasses all Jews, old and young, married and single, gay and straight, families blended by re-marriage, and families in mixed marriages but still striving to live as Jews, *havurot* and groups of friends, whole congregations and communities. We are a people shaped by the shared memory of bondage and exodus, but formed under that mountain. This means that we still believe we have something to offer, ever-renewing teachings that will be important to generations to come, among Jews and reaching beyond our borders. Priests need seminaries in which to be trained. All of our congregations should be such places, academies where Jews are lovingly taught our best message and how to spread it. You have been trained here *li-lemod vele-lammed*; you have studied in order to become teachers, to widen the circle of learning. Rabbis, cantors, and educators thus stand at the vortex of the Jewish mission.

▶▶▶▶ [huc.edu/gradord/11/nygrad](http://huc.edu/gradord/11/nygrad)



1. New York School of Education graduates and faculty.
2. Doctor of Hebrew Letters recipient.
3. Doctor of Ministry recipient.
4. School of Jewish Nonprofit Management graduate.
5. M.A. in Judaic Studies recipients.
6. Graduation at Congregation Emanu-El of the City of New York.
7. The cantorial class of 2011.
8. Investiture at Congregation Emanu-El of the City of New York.
9. The rabbinical class of 2011.



**Rabbi Rachel Cowan, N '89; Executive Director, Institute for Jewish Spirituality,** New York Investiture and Ordination Address, May 8, 2011

To make a difference you must both embrace your power and cultivate humility. Power is not a dirty word. It does not diminish your capacity to serve as a pastor, a teacher, a *schlichtat tzibbur*. To use it wisely, you need to understand the qualities and sources of your particular power; connect it with your vision; work on the quality of humility so you do not confuse your ego's needs with your community's needs; and find the ways to link wisdom and courage. This kind of spiritual leadership is built from many small daily decisions, not from scaling mountain tops. It is collaborative, reflective, compassionate. The more you pay attention to what is true in the moment and see clearly the choices that are open, the more likely you are to act wisely, and not just react emotionally or habitually. For we cannot heal the world without healing our soul. We cannot love our neighbor without loving ourselves. We cannot transform the world without transforming ourselves. Ultimately we do this work on ourselves so that we can do what the prophet Micah commands: to love goodness, do justice, and walk humbly with our God.

▶▶▶▶ <http://huc.edu/gradord/11/nyord>



# Prizes



New York Graduation, May 5, 2011: The 2011 **Dr. Bernard Heller Prize** was awarded to **Dr. Rick Hodes**, Medical Director of Ethiopia for the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, by Ruth O. Freedlander, Co-Trustee of the Dr. Bernard Heller Foundation. Based for nearly thirty years in Ethiopia – a country with one of the largest populations of orphans in the world – Hodes devotes himself to healing Ethiopia's poor and helping its most desperate children.

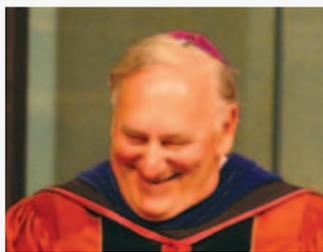
**Dr. Hodes:** When one of the greatest rabbis of the 19th-century, Rabbi Hayyim of Brisk, was asked by his students to define the test of a rabbi, he replied, to redress the grievances of those who are abandoned and alone, to protect the dignity of the poor, and to save the oppressed from the hands of the oppressor.

New York Investiture and Ordination, May 8, 2011: The 2011 **Roger E. Joseph Prize** was presented to **ATZUM-Justice Works** and **Rabbi Levi Lauer, C '72**, its Founding Executive Director, by (from left) Rabbi David Ellenson and the daughters of Roger E. Joseph: Ellen Joseph, Linda Karshan, and Roxanne Leopold. Established in 2002 in Israel, ATZUM's work is founded on the belief that Israel should serve as an example for the rest of the world in addressing social problems.

**Rabbi Lauer:** We understand you granted us this Prize to fortify our resolve not to desist until the evil of human trafficking is driven from our land. ATZUM acknowledges you want us to persist in our efforts to bring economically deprived children who were severely wounded, and children whose parents were disabled or murdered in a terrorist attack, the educational resources requisite for a viable, productive future. We know you expect ATZUM to not rest until every Righteous Person who saved Jewish lives during the Shoah and came to live in Israel is assured the dignity of their last years – home care, medical assistance, and the visits of adoptive grandchildren.



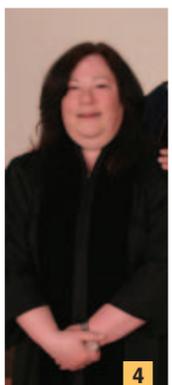
New York Graduation, May 5, 2011: The 2011 **American Jewish Distinguished Service Award** was presented to **Dr. Samuel "Skip" Vichness**, Senior Partner, Quality Camping Properties; Managing Partner, GreyPine LLC; Chair of the Foundation for Jewish Camp.



Cincinnati Graduation, May 19, 2011: The 2011 **Sherut L'Am Award** was presented to **Jerry Tanenbaum**, Chairman, Yad B'Yad Task Force, World Union for Progressive Judaism; Governor Emeritus, HUC-JIR.



# Honoring Our Alumni



1. Doctors of Divinity, *honoris causa*, New York – May 5, 2011.
2. Doctors of Music, *honoris causa*, New York – May 5, 2011.
3. Doctor of Jewish Communal Service, *honoris causa*, New York – May 5, 2011.
4. Doctor of Jewish Religious Education, *honoris causa*, New York – May 5, 2011.
5. Doctors of Divinity, *honoris causa*, Cincinnati – May 19, 2011.
6. Graduate Studies Alumni Recipients of the Founders' Medallion, Cincinnati – May 19, 2011.
7. Doctors of Divinity, *honoris causa*, Los Angeles – May 16, 2011.
8. Doctor of Jewish Communal Service, *honoris causa*, Los Angeles – May 16, 2011.
9. Doctors of Jewish Religious Education, *honoris causa*, Los Angeles – May 16, 2011.

(continued on page 24)



# Visionary Leadership for the American Synagogue

**Dr. Isa Aron**, Professor of Education, HUC-JIR/Jack H. Skirball Campus/Los Angeles; Founding Director, Experiment in Congregational Education

**T**he 1990s was the decade of synagogue transformation. A 1998 study identified no fewer than forty initiatives devoted to revitalizing one or another aspect of synagogue life. Two of the oldest and largest of these projects, the Experiment in Congregational Education (ECE) and Synagogue 2000 (S2K), both based at HUC-JIR, contributed the most to introducing the language of innovation and inspiring many synagogues to innovate. But how successful were these projects in changing the day-to-day experiences of congregants?

In 2005 Professor Lawrence Hoffman of the New York campus (co-founder of S2K) and I recruited two social scientists, Professor Steven M. Cohen (of HUC-JIR) and Ari Y. Kelman (of University of California, Davis) to help us find out. We interviewed 175 lay and professional leaders of eight synagogues that had participated in one or both of our projects and were reputed to have enabled many of their congregants to be life-long, year-round, thoroughly committed and practicing Jews.

As we sifted through our data, certain patterns emerged. The synagogues, whom we termed “visionary” to distinguish them from the merely “functional,” shared six characteristics in common. These characteristics are discussed in depth in our book, *Sacred Strategies: Transforming Synagogues from Functional to Visionary*, which won the 2010 National Jewish Book Award in the category of Education and Jewish Identity.

Extrapolating from the six characteristics of the visionary congregation, one can delineate a parallel set of six characteristics of visionary synagogue leaders:

## Focusing on the Synagogue's Sacred Purpose

Many, if not most, American Jews join congregations in order to receive a set of services (e.g., religious school, celebration of life cycle events). Visionary leaders neither cater to nor settle for this consumerist mentality, striving, instead, to create a sacred community in which members care for one another, the Jewish tradition, the world in which we live, and God.

## Holistic Mindset

Resisting the natural inclination to view the synagogue from their own narrow vantage point, thereby making their work more manageable, visionary leaders see *Torah* (Jewish learning), *Avodah* (Jewish worship) and *G'milut Hasadim* (Acts of Loving Kindness) as intertwined and inseparable. While different leaders may take primary responsibility for each of these, they remain mindful and proactive about the connections between them.

## Working Collaboratively

In the 19th and 20th centuries (and even, to some extent, today) it was common for synagogues to be governed hierarchically, with the work of the clergy sharply differentiated from that of the laity. For visionary leaders, in contrast, a highly participatory culture signifies not loss of control but success in leadership.



Dr. Isa Aron meeting with a Rhea Hirsch School of Education student.

## Concentrating on the Meaning of Traditional Practices

A major theme in American religion over the past few decades has been the rise of seeking meaning. Current and potential congregants choose to affiliate and to become more or less involved in congregational life to the extent that Judaism speaks to their most keenly felt moral and personal issues. With the growing diversity of American Jewry, congregations are challenged now more than ever to provide environments and experiences where meaning-making can happen.

## Innovative

Visionary leaders view themselves as change agents who promote innovation. Ric Rudman, former President of Congregation Beth Am in Los Altos Hills, CA, said:

Every ten years or so you should take all the things you really cherish and zero base them. What do we know now? What's the current reality? Where do [we] want to be in five years? And what changes do we have to make in the current model to get there? That will lead to new insights and improvements in the system.

Of course, innovations don't always succeed, as Susan Wolfe, a Board member at the same congregation, stated:

When you attempt change you have to be willing to fail. It doesn't all work. We've had failures – big failures. Then we step back and regroup and revamp and try to do it better the next time. But if you don't make any mistakes, you don't learn anything.

## Reflective

In keeping with their sacred purpose to create meaningful religious experiences, visionary leaders continually take on new challenges; the only way they can do this is by being reflective. Reflection is required to sort out superficial desire from underlying need, and the merely trendy from the spiritually significant. Reflection is required to keep focused on one's own sphere of influence while being mindful of other, related spheres. Reflection is required to discern the talents of potential partners and the promise of potential innovations. Above all, reflection is required to improve one's own leadership capacities. Synagogue transformation and personal transformation go hand in hand. ■

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**Rabbi Richard Jacobs, N '82, one of the rabbis in our study and the newly elected President of the Union for Reform Judaism, told us: “We need to empower lay people, because it is key to having people lead meaningful Jewish lives. I love when people are learning and teaching, and I have partners.”**

# Synagogue Leadership for the 21st Century

**Dr. Rob Weinberg**, Director, Experiment in Congregational Education;  
Project Manager, Jim Joseph Foundation Education Initiative, HUC-JIR

To fulfill their promise as vital centers for Jewish life in the 21st century, our congregations must transform themselves. For over 18 years, the Experiment in Congregational Education (ECE), an initiative of HUC-JIR's Rhea Hirsch School of Education in Los Angeles, has not only championed the transformation of our congregations, but also taught them how to do it. We have worked with two national cohorts of congregations from throughout the United States, as well as with local cohorts of congregations from New York, Washington, DC, Kansas City, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. With the support of generous funders and partners, including UJA-Federation of New York, the Partnership for Jewish Life and Learning, the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles, The Nathan Cummings Foundation, The Covenant Foundation, The Koret Foundation, the Mandel Foundation, and others, we have worked with these congregations to strengthen their abilities to enrich the lives of their members.

Science fiction writer William Gibson said, "The future is already here, it's just not evenly distributed." For congregations that have embraced the work of transformation, the synagogue of the future is increasingly here because they have learned to treat change and innovation as constant companions, not one-time events. Yet for many more, the opportunity remains to make the future far more evenly distributed among our more than 900 Reform congregations.

Central to our work in transforming congregational life is the challenge of creating Jewish learning that makes a meaningful difference in the lives of learners of all ages. A critical element of ECE's approach to fostering such innovation has been our ongoing efforts to *model* and *cultivate* a new kind of congregational leadership that is both deeply collaborative and essentially Jewish.

## Collaborative leadership

Reform Judaism rests on the proposition that we can reconcile our history and traditions with the contemporary societies and cultures in which today's Jews live. Yet when many of today's synagogue leaders – clergy, professional, and lay – grew up, the primary leadership paradigm was that of the hero leader, the rugged individualist blazing a trail for others to follow. They earned their stripes in corporations in which hierarchical leadership was both practiced and rewarded. Leaders who succeed in fashioning the 21st-century congregation out of the 20th-century congregations they inherit will not be lone heroes or hierarchical bureaucrats but collaborative leaders.

Collaborative leaders view leadership not as a position or a personal quality but as a set of behaviors, an activity in which many people can partake and that can and should be shared and distributed among members of a congregation and its staff. They recognize that no leader can bring all of the talents, knowledge, and capabilities required to address the complex and ever-changing challenges of congregational life.

■  
**Jews affiliate less.**

■  
**"Family units" bear little resemblance to those of the past, and their needs have changed.**

■  
**Technology makes much of what we used to gather for available to us anytime, anywhere.**

■  
**Knowledge is available at the click of a mouse but meaning remains elusive.**

Collaborative congregational leaders recognize that a synagogue is not a business; its essential rationales for decision-making are not efficiency and accountability. Rather, synagogues exist to help us build real and meaningful relationships not only with God, Torah, and the Jewish People, but also with one another. They recognize that a vision that will energize members and direct their energies in a unified fashion cannot be one that a few people at the top hold and pronounce, but must be one that everyone understands, communicates, shares, and has a hand in creating.

Increasingly, as emphasized in our New York-based work with partners The Jewish Education Project and the Leadership Institute of HUC-JIR and the Jewish Theological Seminary, we are demonstrating that collaborative leaders – both lay and professional – succeed by collaborating well beyond the boundaries of their own congregations when they interact in *networks* with other congregations and sources of ideas and resources that can help fuel and accelerate innovation.

Too many of our leaders mistake cooperation or coordination for collaboration. Real collaboration involves active interchange, and engaging by balancing influencing and being influenced: *listening* to others – signaling an openness to learn from others' ideas – and *sharing* your unique perspective and expertise – enabling ideas, language, values, and ownership to emerge in the space between "mine" and "yours" thereby truly generating "ours." It also can mean directly sharing professional or personal expertise or knowledge with other leaders in a way that leads them to consider that knowledge while remaining empowered. Finally, real collaboration sometimes means exercising *tzimtzum*, engaging by consciously withholding active participation at select times in order to empower and/or learn from others.

## Jewish leadership

The Reform challenge of change as a constant in dialogue with tradition requires that our leaders interact in a serious way with that tradition and root their decisions not only in the exigencies of today's world but also in the lessons and values of our shared heritage and sacred texts. Transformative leaders bring meaning to what they do by spending as much time studying our texts and wrestling with their relevance to their complex decisions as they do studying budget spreadsheets and synagogue by-laws. They understand their leadership responsibilities as part of a sacred covenant in which the voice of Jewish values and texts must be heard and heeded.

The ECE's experience shows that our congregations can transform themselves to once again become and remain vital anchoring institutions in the lives of North American Reform Jews. Succeeding in the challenge will require of all our leaders – be they clergy, professional, or lay – collaborative Jewish leadership for the 21st century. ■



**Dr. Rob Weinberg teaching at an ECE conference where clergy, educational, and lay leaders collaborate to transform congregational life through Jewish learning.**

**As leadership scholar Ronald Heifetz put it, "The lone-warrior model of leadership is heroic suicide. Each of us has blind spots that require the vision of others. Each of us has passions that need to be contained by others."**

# The Leadership Institute: Shaping Congregational Leaders and Learners

Dr. Evie Rotstein, Director, Leadership Institute, Shaping Congregational Leaders and Learners, HUC-JIR/New York and JTS



**S**even years ago, the Leadership Institute for Congregational School Educators, fully funded by UJA-Federation of New York's Commission on Jewish Identity and Renewal, made a serious commitment to address the critical need to increase the leadership capacity of congregational educators in a multi-faceted professional learning initiative. By bringing together two national leaders in the preparation and professional development of Jewish educators, HUC-JIR's New York School of Education and the Davidson School of Education at the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS), this initiative created and implemented a model for strengthening the educational leadership of congregational schools.

While professional development in Jewish educational settings is gaining ground, it still is often short-term and episodic in nature, rather than systematic. It also does not necessarily focus on Jewish content and is frequently geared to broad rather than specific audi-

going learning and to provide guidance and coaching. There are now 77 alumni from the first two cohorts who completed the Leadership Institute in 2007 and in 2010 and 38 educators in the current cohort.

Evaluation, both formative and summative, plays a significant role in the ongoing development of the project. The formal evaluation focuses on the following questions:

- How are the participating educators' leadership, understanding, skills, attitudes, and behaviors being shaped by their experiences in the Leadership Institute?
- What impact does professional learning have in implementing change in their schools?

The Fellows in the Leadership Institute report many significant changes as a result of their participation in this initiative:

## Experimenting and Taking Risks

Another powerful change has been the educators' willingness to take risks and to experiment with new concepts and learning strategies. When the Fellows were given a mini-grant to implement a professional learning plan for their own faculty, they were able to experiment with different professional learning models, including peer coaching, collaborative lesson planning, and learning sessions that focused on whole person learning goals that involve a spiritual dimension. Other Fellows developed new models for family learning and student engagement.

## Learning during Implementation

Educational leaders are more often poised to grow and learn if the professional learning experience is embedded in ongoing practice and they have a chance to transform the constraints they face. Activities and assignments during the Institute all relate to the

**The role of educational leaders in facilitating meaningful change in a school is well established. Focusing on people is the most effective way to change any organization.**

ences. This situation is perpetuated because Jewish educators have few professional development opportunities available to them. In a system where turnover is common, novice educational leaders continue to require expert guidance and assistance.

The Leadership Institute is a two-and-a-half-year program with the goal to build leadership capacity, enhance Judaica knowledge, and develop pedagogic skills. For the third cohort of educators, the learning involves two 10-day summer institutes, ten days of professional symposia during the school year, and an Israel seminar. The participating educators also have the opportunity for individualized learning based on a 360-degree assessment. The educators are requested to create a leadership team in their own congregation comprised of clergy, lay people, and teachers who will meet for a 6-month period to explore issues of vision, goals, and change theory and then receive funding to create an innovative learning model and professional learning program for faculty. Each educator is assigned a mentor for the duration of the project to support on-

## Expanded Sense of Professional Identity

Education directors have moved from seeing themselves as school administrators who carry out the curriculum, supervise teachers, and deal with students to seeing themselves in an expanded role and able to impact the greater educational system (e.g. responsible for helping to develop an overall vision for Jewish education, partnerships with colleagues, working with lay committees).

Whereas "politics" and synagogue context were generally in the far background for the educators at the start of the Leadership Institute, they became increasingly cognizant of these forces and able to use them to promote educational change. In this sense the educators began to see themselves as systems players who have multiple functions: instructional leadership for teachers, change agent, and team player.

educators' work and are applied in the work setting. Since new ideas and actions require practice, the Institute asks the participants to bring in case studies and dilemmas to the structured process of a peer consultancy protocol.

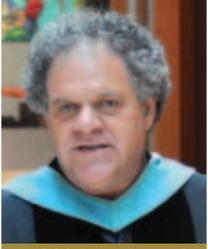
## Commitment to All Levels in the System

Over 30 years ago, Donald Schon made the observation that educational leaders are part of the overall system. "We must become able not only to transform our institutions, in response to changing situations and requirements: we must invest and develop institutions which are "learning systems," that is to say systems capable of bringing about their own continuing transformation." The Leadership Institute understands that in order to transform Jewish learning, educational leaders need to facilitate learning for all stakeholders in the congregation. ■

(Top) Tallit opening ceremony launching the Leadership Institute's retreat.

(Bottom) Symposium discussing team collaboration among clergy, lay leaders, and educators.





Rabbi Sam Joseph

## An Opening Thought – Rabbi Samuel K. Joseph

This past year at the Union for Reform Judaism Scheidt Leadership Institute for New Temple Presidents, where I was one of the faculty, a woman ran up to greet me. “Rabbi Joseph, remember me?” she asked with a big grin. It took me a moment. She was one of my first congregants, almost twenty years ago, when I was the rabbi of the United Jewish Congregation of Hong Kong. This was a congregation I helped found in the late 1980’s. Back then, Diana was new to congregational life, but once captured she could not get enough of the study, worship, and especially, community. She participated in every facet of the congregation. “Diana, what are you doing here?” I responded. “It is all your fault,” she replied. “When we returned to the U.S. we joined a congregation. As I became more involved I found myself more and more in decision-making positions. And as my responsibilities increased I wound up on the Board of the temple. Now, after all these years, I am the new temple president!” For Diana, as many members of boards in our Jewish world, she found commitment to the work of her organization led to a deep sense of community, which led to her being “called” to leadership, which led to her wanting to carry forward the mission of her organization as its president. In this brief conversation with some members of the HUC-JIR Board of Governors, you will hear their caring, their passion, their commitment, their call to leadership, and their mission. You will get a glimpse of the challenges facing such leaders in the 21st century. And you will receive some insights

**Nancy Kasten:** Being a Governor of the College-Institute has challenged me to develop my own sense of spirituality, to continue to invest in my own intellectual development, and to do so in the context of my interaction with the College-Institute as well as the broader Jewish world.

**Terry Rosenberg:** We have to be what I would call ‘students of history.’ We have to have a much deeper and broader knowledge of Reform Judaism, the College-Institute, and the Reform Movement to fully understand where we are and how we got here. This knowledge is essential if we are to be able to make sound, critical decisions about the future.

### Rabbi Joseph: How do we do that?

**Terry Rosenberg:** Our Governance Task Force is now looking at how to better orient and educate new Board members, and provide all Governors “continuing education” about the College-Institute and the significant issues of our time. I believe that part of it is providing certain materials and information, but mostly it is about the connections we make with each other and the way in which we create space for “consequential conversations” to happen, both spontaneously and as part of our ongoing agenda. Like any learning environment, one must design the “conversational space” so that what you want is capable of happening. Otherwise it never moves beyond someone’s “good idea.”

**Marjorie Miller:** You have to know what HUC-JIR is before you learn more about it. It’s a process.

**Jay Geller:** We should ask our current Board members, why are you here? What is it about this institution that makes you want to devote time and energy to its success?

**Terry Rosenberg:** We need to cultivate a new sensibility that board service — especially with an institution like HUC-JIR — is not just about policy making and oversight, but about shaping the future of the Jewish community and Reform Judaism’s role in that future. If the invitation is compelling, if people really feel that they can be part of creating the future, they will serve.

### Rabbi Joseph: Is it a “calling” to serve on the HUC-JIR Board?

**Stan Rabin:** I’m not sure it’s a “calling.” Certainly, for me, when I was asked, I could not imagine a vibrant Reform Movement without HUC-JIR. Having said that, I came to the Board with tremendous experience and background in profit and non-profit boards, mainly Jewish but not exclusively, and with only a rather basic understanding of what HUC-JIR does. As we recruit new Governors, we need to strengthen their orientation.

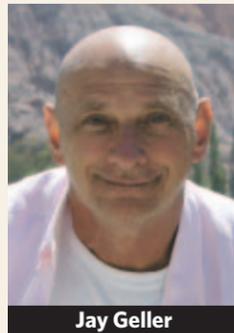
**Barbara Friedman:** It’s not easy to serve on boards today. It takes time, effort, and work. To be on the HUC-JIR Board, you’d better be really committed to liberal



Andrew Berger



Barbara Friedman



Jay Geller



John Golden



Sue Neuman Hochberg

# Governance and Leadership: A

Moderated by Rabbi Samuel K. Joseph, RJE, C '76; Eleanor Sinsheimer Distinguished

into why the Board is so strong. It is populated with reflective, insightful members. Life today does not make it any easier than in previous generations to give of one’s time, expertise, and generosity to organizational life and leadership. The HUC-JIR Board of Governors is very fortunate to have such members who do give fully of themselves.

### Rabbi Samuel K. Joseph: What does HUC-JIR’s mission or vision require of you as a Governor?

**Jay Geller:** It requires getting to know the students who are served by this institution and the programs that this institution offers.

**Andrew Berger:** It’s very important that Governors be knowledgeable of the broader Jewish world because we have a big impact beyond the Reform Movement.

**Michael Lorge:** We have to be both engaged broadly and advocates. We need to be engaged inward, not only within HUC-JIR but within the Movement as a whole, to have a sense of what the needs of the Movement are. Our advocacy must be directed outward to make sure that our mission and our programs are known.

**Marjorie Miller:** We have to be able to communicate our passion for Reform Judaism and for HUC-JIR to other people.

**John Golden:** From my perspective, HUC-JIR’s mission is to show a vibrancy and relevancy that’s crucial to the continuation and success of what I call acculturated Judaism. That leads us to think intergenerationally or generatively.

**Joan Pines:** I think that a Jewish study component should be a part of every Board meeting.

**Sue Neuman Hochberg:** I would like to see the Governors spend even more time on our campuses, becoming more aware of what’s actually going on.

### Rabbi Joseph: What are the challenges of 21st-century board leadership?

**Nancy Kasten:** We have many different models of governance now, and we’ve been operating with one that’s adapted little by little as HUC-JIR has grown and become a more complex institution. Every leader of HUC-JIR needs to have the interest and desire to understand the institution at every level, across every campus. Figuring out how to do that in an environment where we have so many competing interests and involvements is a big challenge imposed by our culture and our lifestyle.

**Barbara Friedman:** One challenge is that there are a lot of things that need discussion. So much time is spent on budget and finance that we have limited time for the things that all of us care so much about: Reform Judaism, Judaism itself, how we strengthen our up-and-coming Board leaders, and how to support them with orientation.

**Andrew Berger:** Another challenge is finding people to serve. There are so many opportunities for Jewish leadership today, unlike the past, when choices were limited. Today you can be involved in any form of civic leadership, either in your community or nationally. We need to deepen the pool of prospective leaders.

Judaism and to ensuring the future for our grandchildren and great-grandchildren so that there will be a Judaism with which they will feel comfortable. So I actually feel very strongly that it is a “calling.” There are many choices we can make; we can serve on lots of different boards that lend some distinction. But what distinguishes you as an HUC-JIR Governor is that you care about an institution that’s producing leadership for the Jewish community.

**John Golden:** To me, it’s not a burden, but an opportunity to maintain the continuum of a Reform, liberal Judaism, rooted in a 4,000-year-old tradition. As we get 60-plus years and several generations away from the Holocaust, there is the added responsibility of continuing this strain of Judaism, especially in the face of challenges from other Jewish denominations and other people. So for me it is a “calling” to maintain that link and 4,000-year tradition for our prodigy. I came to this not through an attachment to the synagogue, but through an attachment to this greater responsibility. There is a little voice inside me that says, “You should be doing this.”

**Michael Lorge:** If we think of the term “calling,” as we normally hear it in terms of rabbinical leadership or Jewish professional careers, we think of it in terms of serving the Jewish People and serving God through the Jewish People. I think that’s where our commitment comes from. I can’t imagine why anyone would want to get involved in an institution such as HUC-JIR unless it was this higher sense of purpose. If we accept the notion that there is a “calling” that brings us to get engaged, part of the discussion has to be how do we find others with that

same sense of “calling,” or how do you express this opportunity in ways that other people will feel committed to it. It’s easy to get someone to engage in the lyric opera because when you walk into the lyric opera hall, their name is going to be there, they are serving with others from their community, and it gives them honor, *kavod*. We have to find ways to convey that notion of “calling” to others. It’s higher up on my vanity scale of charitable involvement.

**Andrew Berger:** The groundbreaking management theorist Peter Drucker said that the purpose of any not-for-profit is to change people’s lives. I don’t think there’s anything bigger that a Jewish organization can do than to create the people that change people’s lives. We create, educate, and ordain leaders who are going out there to change lives. I can’t think of anything that is more important and more meaningful.

**Terry Rosenberg:** I think we sometimes put the cart before the horse. You may not hear the “call” in the beginning. It may be something less exalted, like responding to an invitation from a friend you admire. But once you are involved, if you find real meaning and fulfillment, then I think it does become a “calling.” And that should be one of our goals — to engage people so meaningfully that they find themselves connected in ways they could not have predicted or imagined going in.

organization, the institution.

**Sue Neuman Hochberg:** I think that we really need to know our stuff. And when we ask other people for their support and participation, we have to be able to answer any question they ask us.

**Nancy Kasten:** One of the pitfalls is that we can easily mistake the part for the whole. I tend to think of our experiences as Board members often as the blind man and the elephant: you touch a part and you think you know what HUC-JIR is all about. You may not have any idea of what is happening on the other side of the elephant.

**John Golden:** Our longer Board trips to our Jerusalem campus are a model in that they have given us enhanced opportunities to delve into each of the various programs and meet with our stateside and Israeli students there.

**Michael Lorge:** The Board meeting structure should not preclude our ability to see and do all these things that we’ve repeatedly said we know are inherently important. We shouldn’t feel limited that these experiences can only be obtained during Board meetings. Perhaps we need to formalize the informal, with the invitation (and expectation) that Governors find time to visit campuses, meet administration, and engage with students and faculty in a meaningful encounter.

so that at the end of the day, when big issues were discussed and tough decisions were made, enough people on the board had real ownership of the decision and the decision would stick. Because decisions that get made without buy-in, over time, don’t stick. Furthermore, experientially, running a not-for-profit board – especially a fine board like HUC-JIR’s with a cohort of strong peers, is a different experience than a for-profit board, where, at the end of the day, there is a decision maker.

**Terry Rosenberg:** I find working in groups to be one of the most challenging endeavors there is. Everyone comes with their particular history, preferences, and opinions, and somehow we have to find our way together and make decisions that everyone can support. That takes conscious effort and practice. As a culture, we do not appreciate, nor were we ever really taught, how to listen generously. It is really more of an art than a skill, and requires opening oneself up to different perspectives and consciously putting one’s own perspective “on hold.” Given how passionate we are about our views, that is quite challenging. The objective is not to persuade everyone to agree, but when true listening is present, the most creative decisions are allowed to surface, and the process is much easier and the outcome much better.

**Rabbi Joseph:** You are implying that relationships are vitally important. As Jews, we are very used to a long tradition of consensus decision making.

We pretend to abide by Robert’s Rules of Order. But Robert was not a Jew, he was actually a Huguenot. We Jews are very verbal. While Robert’s Rules are designed to close discussion, we Jews are enculturated to continue decision. Creating a place for continued discussion has to be built upon relationships.



Nancy Kasten



Michael Lorge



Marjorie Miller



Joan Pines



Stan Rabin



Terry Rosenberg

# Board of Governors Roundtable

Service Professor of Jewish Education and Leadership Development, HUC-JIR/Cincinnati

**Marjorie Miller:** Being an Overseer, a member of one of the regional advisory groups for each of our campuses, provides our lay leaders with the opportunity to learn a great deal more about HUC-JIR.

**Sue Neuman Hochberg:** I became a Western Region Overseer because I had a daughter who was ordained at the Los Angeles campus. I don’t see it as a “calling,” but that it may become a “calling” once we’re there.

**Rabbi Joseph:** Jewish sociologists say that this may be the first time in Jewish history that four generations are at the board table at the same time. Each of these generations was acculturated by different influences and they have many different ways of understanding what an organization, and commitment to that organization, means. They have diverse attitudes toward how they communicate through hierarchy or authority. In your experience, are you seeing generational impact in Jewish leadership and on boards?

**Jay Geller:** Both the HUC-JIR and URJ Boards lack younger representation, and we’re really missing something because our conversations are limited to a very similar, “baby boomer”-plus generational background. I think we need to get more voices around the table.

**Rabbi Joseph:** As a leader, what mistakes have you witnessed other leaders making?

**Stan Rabin:** One mistake is the inability or lack of knowledge of how to use power. You have to use power wisely and effectively. And very often leaders don’t, and ultimately forget that it’s not about them. It’s about the

**Jay Geller:** I can tell you that our students have a very keen interest in who the Governors are, how they got to be Governors, and what they do. And as I said at the outset, the best way to really learn about the institution is to meet the people who it serves and who are being trained there. It’s a terrific idea to spend time on a campus, and even better, to sit in on an actual class. That’s the best way to find out what we do and how we do it.

**Marjorie Miller:** Our faculty’s writings – online or in print – are another meaningful window onto all that HUC-JIR offers. You can learn so much about HUC-JIR that way.

**Rabbi Joseph:** What are the characteristics that every leader should possess, and what advice would you give?

**Andrew Berger:** From what I’ve seen the best leaders are nimble. They may have set ideas about how things should be, but they’re willing to listen to other perspectives. And they are willing to turn on a dime if the information they get or the argument proposed or the discussion leads them in a different direction.

**Joan Pines:** I would add that they’re willing to delegate.

**Sue Neuman Hochberg:** You need to engage your board so that they feel that they have an ownership and they’re not just a rubber stamp.

**John Golden:** When I chaired a college board, there was controlled chaos during board meetings to allow people to participate and feel comfortable in disagreeing publicly in a polite and even emotional way if necessary –

## Concluding Thoughts — Rabbi Joseph

There is a very old bromide about board members that states, “when choosing a board member remember the 3 W’s.....Work, Wisdom, and Wealth. Choose people who have and can share all 3 W’s.” While this statement does have some truth to it, it is clear from the Board of Governors’ conversation that 21st-century board leadership requires much more. We heard about mission and interpreting it to ever-widening circles of influence, learning, ability to come to consensus decisions, giving of one’s time, and the centrality of building a community of members of the Board. These are just to name but some of what is needed today. To name but a few more challenges in today’s world, board leaders must be cognizant of, and act on, the shrinking of our globe and how that affects the organization. Boards have to have an increased acceptance of diverse populations in our lives and how that affects both the board and the organization.

It has never been easy to have an effective volunteer board. It requires constant crafting and re-crafting. I think that we can add 3 C’s to our 3 W’s list: Caring, Commitment, and Community. The contemporary board will add these ideals to their list of qualifications that potential board members must possess. The challenge our Board members face is great. From this conversation I am sure they meet the challenge. ■

# Women in Rabbinical Leadership

Rabbi Jacqueline Koch Ellenson, N '83; Executive Director, Women's Rabbinic Network

From a small group of women who braved the barriers to women's ordination in the late 1970's, women rabbis, now numbering 600 in the Reform Movement, have today become a significant influence on the Jewish scene. Over the past 39 years, we have attained leadership positions in synagogues, instituted prayer book reform, led the way for feminist scholarship, included women's voices in biblical interpretation, and created new prayers and liturgies for formerly ignored and neglected sacred moments. In our day, the presence of women in public leadership roles as rabbis in the Jewish community is commonplace. It was not always that way.

Since the watershed event of the ordination of Rabbi Sally Priesand in 1972, the Jewish world has been profoundly changed. As women have entered a previously male world, we have taken seriously our mandate to make the tradition more accessible and equitable, make our workplaces more family friendly, and to confront head-on any barriers to women's advancement and participation in all aspects of Jewish communal leadership.

What do we know about women in rabbinic leadership?

They have a determination to succeed and to serve the Jewish people and want to innovate and create new realities for that success and service. Many have taken a traditional work trajectory, climbing the traditional "ladder" of advancement. Many have opted for a work pattern more closely resembling a "lattice" of advancement, trading traditional markers of success for flexibility in the workplace. Some women rabbis try to create new models for rabbinical leadership in their communities, such as a co-rabbinate or part-time, portfolio-specific rabinates. While many go into congregational work, women rabbis have advanced and professionalized non-traditional paths in rabbinical service, such as healing and chaplaincy, education, and Hillel work. Because of women's presence in the rabbinical workplace, equity in salaries, benefits, and advancement has become a social justice issue for women rabbis and all rabbis.

Women in rabbinical leadership have made possible and necessary the integration into the workplace of personal issues such as childbearing and child rearing. This concern for parenting, now brought into the public sphere, normalized the con-

Donald Woodman



Judy Chicago, *The Female Face of Pesach, Study for Matzoh cover; watercolor and pencil on rag paper; 1999.*

**If women's entrance into the rabbinate has encouraged a vocabulary of access, egalitarianism, and inclusion, that implementation of equality of access and inclusion must continue to be a priority of the community.**

Women, and women rabbis, will continue to contribute to the evolution of our tradition and to the enrichment of our community. We have worked very hard to bring this about. The entrance of women into the rabbinate has been a blessing for our congregations, our communities, and our Jewish world. All of us must commit to extending the influence of that blessing. The future health and continuity of our community depend on it. ■

versation about this private concern. Women rabbis changed pregnancy and child bearing into an issue of societal significance requiring a communal response. As women have been successful in redefining their relationship to work and to their work place, men have benefited as well. Male rabbis, bolstered by their women colleagues' ability to conceptualize and combine work and family/personal life in a humane way that does not jeopardize either their work or their families, have happily adopted some of the alternative rabbinical models that women created. Women may have led the charge for different ways to be a rabbi, but the conversation women initiated has been welcomed across the rabbinical spectrum and across gender lines. Leadership need not include denial of self and family. Rather, leadership can embed and integrate the experiences of gender and the experience of family in daily life.

Women continue to choose the rabbinate as a career in ever increasing numbers. The contributions of women rabbis have breadth and depth. Yet, questions and concerns remain. There are still inequities of salary, benefits, and advancement that must be documented. The Jewish community must continue the conversation about the variety of models of success and leadership. Our community needs more information about the progression and advancement of women rabbis in all areas of the rabbinate, in order to assure their continued commitment and contribution to rabbinical service. As younger women become rabbis, how can the first generation of women rabbis share their hard-won successes and challenging failures in a meaningful way? Concerns about the "feminization of the synagogue" abound and must still be addressed in a serious, thoughtful way. How will the conversation about a "successful" career continue to change?

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# From Mother to Daughter: Leadership Beyond Expectations

Dr. Carole Balin, N '91; Professor of History, HUC-JIR/New York

Dr. Wendy Zierler, Associate Professor of Modern Jewish Literature and Feminist Studies, HUC-JIR/New York

**H**istorically, Jewish tradition was handed down from father to son. But this was not the case for at least one mother-daughter pair. Hava Shapiro (1878-1943) became a prolific Hebrew writer largely due to the influence of her mother Menuhah. Remarkably, Hava boasted that Menuhah's command of Hebrew was "equal to that of any man" and that her mother "derived her chief pleasure and comfort from reading books and newspapers" in the ancient tongue (Shapiro, "Chanukah Days," 1924). Born in the Pale of Settlement, Hava Shapiro would come to publish nearly 100 Hebrew works over the course of her lifetime, which ended abruptly in 1943 – days before the Jews of her community in Prague were rounded up and deported to Theresienstadt.

*You shall tell your son on that day [of Passover], saying,  
'It is because of what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt.'*

Passover Haggadah, quoting Exodus 13:8

*I, too, know "the [Four] Questions" by heart. But no one pays attention to me; the main attraction is my brother. Inside I am seething. I would have asked them even better than he did. But they send me to the women's table. Only my mother sees my pain and consoles me with the wonderful caress of her eyes.*

Hava Shapiro, "Passover Nights" (Haolam, 1925)

Among her voluminous writings, Shapiro's semi-autobiographical short story "Passover Days" (1925) evokes a social order where women's leadership roles are valued equally with those of men.

*At home, the great preparations for the days of Passover began right after Purim. Grandfather would begin cleaning his long beard after each meal, touching it with his fingertips and checking it for traces of breadcrumbs. We opened all the closets and crates and chests and took out all the drawers and belongings, whose very purpose and existence we knew nothing of all year long.*

*All at once, Gittl the cook donned her most serious face, as befitting one of high station. This simple, wretched creature [Hebrew: aluvah] was now all aglow in her special costume. She had strength and status. From time to time she castigated us, the children, but we did not get annoyed at her on account of it. We recognized her new importance and elevated status.... Why, here she sits... completely wrapped in a long cloth outfit, part dress, part nightgown, a new kerchief on her head.... Every once in a while, in come Mother, then the aunts, then Grandmother. They sit nearby for a brief while and supervise the work of Gittl the cook, who takes immense joy in her newfound status.*

By calling attention to the invaluable service rendered by women, Shapiro points out, ironically, how much observance of Passover – which, of course, celebrates liberation from bondage – has depended on the domestic servitude of females. She refers to Gittl as "a simple, wretched creature," which is, on the one hand, an acknowledgment of her labor, while on the other, a form of praise. After all, the Rabbis regarded no less a figure than Moses as the paradigmatic *aluv* (wretched man), whose humility exceeded that of all others [Masechtot ketanot avot Chapter 23, "Ben Zoma"]. Thus, Gittl becomes a Mosaic figure of sorts, whose humble comportment nevertheless generates impressive results.

*A week before Passover is matzah-baking day in our household: a great holiday for us. Our studies cease completely. Everyone bustles around us. In the great kitchen, long tables, covered with white cloth are set up, across the length of the room. All along the tables, from end to end, women draped in white aprons with new kerchiefs on their heads stand like a trained army. From time to time, the female supervisor brings in the dough from the room next door, carrying it aloft. She divides it in pieces according to the number of women helping. Each one receives her piece and tries to best the others in smoothing and rounding the matzah, nicely, nicely. And Grandfather hurries. He stands at one end of the table right next to the oven, his face ablaze with complete concentration. Around him are the other men involved in the work. They are rolling little iron wheels with sharp edges that are white with heat over the matzahs. Their sleeves are rolled up, and with marvelous speed they are rushing to*

*stretch the matzah onto the baker's shovel while the baker stretches out the shovel at regular intervals, his face aglow, his long cloak unbuttoned, and his yarmulke falling off his head. He coughs and coughs ...*

*In the next room, where the dough is being prepared, sits the servant Susil, completely wrapped in white like the dead – silent, with no sign of life. Only when they bring her a bowl does she measure flour with a measuring cup from a full crate that stands on the bench nearby, returning to her place without uttering a sound. She is forbidden from speaking out of concern for the [leavened] vapors that might escape from her mouth into the [pure] flour in the bowl. The same prohibition against speech pertains to the other men and women who are busy with the work.*

Shapiro's women undertake their tasks with utmost seriousness, in contrast to the men, whose slovenly dress is an affront to the decorum of the pristine Passover preparation. How corrosive, too, the unseemly cough of the male baker, whose sloppy spittle flies in the face of the rule to refrain from speaking.

At the same time, the simple white uniform worn by the women suggests a *kittl* [the shroud-like garb worn by a man at his wedding, festivals and burial], which might imply a challenge to the dominion of Grandfather who sits during the Seder "at the head of the table...wrapped in his white kittl..."

Powerfully and poignantly, Shapiro is able to insinuate herself into the chain of male transmission because her mother passed down knowledge to her daughter.

*And suddenly, from the distant room of my elders, the deathly image of Susil the servant is revealed before me within the gloom of the corridor. She beckons to me: 'Come here, my good girl, write me a note.'*

*I am startled by this profanation of the holy and call out: 'Now? With you dressed like that?'*

*'No matter, my girl, he is waiting.' And she presses me: 'You write such lovely notes, he said.'*

*I am drawn to the image of this "dead body" to write a letter on her behalf to the one she loves.*

Menuhah, the mother, gained entrée to the all-male tradition by mastering its language. She then conveyed that competency to Hava – the daughter who grew from a girl engaged in letter-writing into a woman fully participating in the world of Hebrew letters. So goes the exclusive male hold on the chain of transmission. ■

Carole Balin and Wendy Zierler's English translation of their book *Behikansi atah [In My Entering Now: An Anthology of the Writings of Hava Shapiro]* (Tel Aviv: Vashti Series on Women of Resling Press, 2008) is forthcoming from Wayne State University Press.



**Images from the First Cincinnati Haggadah, HUC Ms 444, late 15th century; Klau Library, HUC-JIR/Cincinnati: Father, mother, and son standing for Kiddush, the first ritual of the Seder; A man searching for leaven, *bi'ur hametz*, by the light of a candle on the night of the 14th day of Nisan, as decreed by the rabbis (Mishnah Pesachim 1:1)**



# Reflections on Jewish Power and Influence

Dr. Steven Windmueller, Rabbi Alfred Gottschalk Emeritus Professor in Jewish Communal Service, HUC-JIR/Jack H. Skirball Campus/Los Angeles

**I**s American Jewry losing some of its political clout or is the nature of Jewish political influence undergoing a significant and important transition? Six factors would seem to be important measures of influence and effectiveness with reference to the Jewish vote.

First, as Jewish demographic numbers remain at best stabilized, but more likely shrinking, other ethnic and religious communities are seeing their voting numbers increasing and their political impact expanding. While Jews vote in disproportionate numbers to any other ethnic or religious group, this may not offset the declining impact of the "Jewish vote." Correspondingly, Jewish financial support for elected officials remains static, while other interest groups are rapidly growing their economic influence with government officials and political party leaders, both changing and expanding the political landscape.

Second, as key states within the Northeast corridor lose congressional seats, Jewish political clout will be furthered minimized or altered. Based on the 2010 census, Congressional seats have been reapportioned to Southern and Western states with less significant Jewish populations.

Third, our community's strongest allies within the Congress on both domestic and international concerns are stepping away; some have elected to retire, while others were defeated over the course of the past several election cycles. In fact, one-third of the Congress over the past two years has been replaced by a new generation of representatives. A significant number of Jewish elected officials at all levels of government are also concluding their service at this time, further weakening the presence of Jews in some key elected positions. Despite the loss of specific leaders, a new generation of Jewish elected officials is beginning to emerge. Representative Eric Canter (R), the House Majority Leader, represents one of these newer voices.

Fourth, are Jewish voting patterns changing? There is evidence to suggest that younger voters are less connected to some of the core political issues of interest to the Jewish community and that this age cohort also exhibit a greater propensity to declare

## Loss of Jewish Members of the Congress and Senate in 2010-2012

**Representative Jane Harmon**  
(California: Resigned from the House)

**Representatives Brad Sherman and Howard Berman**  
(California: Likely to face one another in a newly configured Congressional District as a result of the 2010 Census and California redistricting)

**Representative Anthony Weiner**  
(New York: Resigned and his District is likely to be reconfigured)

**Representative Robert Filner**  
(California: May resign in order to run for mayor of San Diego)

**Senator Russ Feingold**  
(Wisconsin: Defeated in November 2010)

**Senator Joseph Lieberman**  
(Connecticut: Announced plans to retire)

**Senator Herb Kohl**  
(Wisconsin: Announced plans to retire)

themselves as "independent" voters, rejecting the traditional pattern of party affiliation that defined prior generations of Jews. New immigrants, more traditionally-observant Jews, and a shift of political loyalties among some Baby Boomers have created some momentum within the ranks of the Republican Party. Some have suggested that even a 20% shift within the Jewish voting block could alter the outcomes of close national elections in such key swing states as Ohio and Florida.

There is some additional data available to reflect a growing disconnect between voting patterns in national elections and those related to state and local campaigns. Are Jews increasingly voting their self-interests and pocket book concerns in the case of this second category, yet expressing their ideological beliefs and party loyalties when casting their ballots in national elections?

There appears to be a more general shift in the reshaping of "liberalism" on the part of the Jewish electorate, where moderate positions are replacing the more traditional left-of-center political perspective. This shift seems evident as voters become more selective in identifying with liberal causes and, in turn, are redefining how they interpret the nature of their ideological credentials and voting positions.

Finally, but of particular significance, is the absence of a shared Jewish political agenda. In its place one finds a deep and, at times, angry social divide that defines the current political state of American Jewry. For some observers of the American Jewish scene this new reality portends a serious crisis; as a minority community, Jews cannot afford the luxury of being seen as a house divided. In the absence of a common focus, a divided and inflamed polity has permitted itself to become embroiled in controversy and discord; civility has given way to partisanship and the evidence of communal conflict. Ethnic communities operate within a particular framework of influence and credibility. When their power is understood to be compromised or weakened by internal discord, the capacity to be politically effective is proportionally reduced. Yet, other voices within the community are welcoming this reconfiguration of power, suggesting that this moment in time reflects the maturing of our community, where diversity of opinion should be welcomed and embraced. ■

*This article is drawn, in part, from Dr. Windmueller's recently released 2011 Jewish Political Survey, where some 2300 individuals offered their views on an array of political themes. Dr. Windmueller's writings can be found at [thewindreport.com](http://thewindreport.com).*

**Based on June 2010 Gallup Daily interviewing, American Jews tilt to the Democratic candidate over the Republican candidate 62% to 28% when asked for which party's candidate they will vote this fall. If we re-percentage down to a two-party vote (i.e., taking out the undecideds), we get a 69% to 31% distribution of the Jewish vote. That's off a little from the 78% vote the exit polls showed Obama getting from Jews in the 2008 election. But we would expect some differences based on the fact that this is a midterm election rather than a presidential election, and the fact that we are still dealing with registered voters at this point, not likely voters. June 2010 Gallup data also show that Jews are continuing to give Obama a differentially higher approval rating.**

## Jews, Black Protestants, and the Tea Party

- Among Jews, the religiously unaffiliated, and black Protestants, there is more opposition than support for the Tea Party.
- Nearly half of Jews (49%) say they disagree with the Tea Party movement, compared with 15% who agree with it.
- Among the unaffiliated, more than four-in-ten (42%) disagree with the movement while 15% agree with it.
- About two-thirds of atheists and agnostics (67%) disagree with the movement.
- Most black Protestants polled (56%) say they have not heard of the Tea Party or have no opinion about it. But among black Protestants who offer an opinion, those who disagree with the movement outnumber those who agree with it by more than five-to-one (37% disagree vs. 7% agree).

# The Ability to Act: Teaching Jewish Leadership and Power

**Rabbi Jonah Pesner, N '97;** Director, Just Congregations, Union for Reform Judaism

**Rabbi Stephanie Kolin, N '06;** Lead California Organizer, West Coast Office, Just Congregations, Union for Reform Judaism

If we seek to be leaders, we do not serve our constituents well by telling them how things should be, leaving them frustrated and impotent. We lead by helping them build the power that they need to act. In fact, we best lead by teaching them how to become more powerful as leaders themselves – and we do it by practicing and teaching “congregation-based community organizing” at HUC-JIR and throughout the Reform Movement. In doing so, we help realize compelling Jewish visions by engaging, training, and cultivating broad networks of other leaders who themselves become more powerful.

Why do we believe that the Jewish community needs rabbis, cantors, educators, and Jewish nonprofits leaders to be powerful?

It was out of this conviction that Rabbi Kolin and Jeannie Appleman, a veteran community organizer with Jewish Funds for Justice, together with Rabbi Noah Farkas, then a rabbinical student at the Jewish Theological Seminary, launched a fellowship called “Leadership for Public Life.” Committed to creating communities of leaders who are able to act effectively together for systemic change, this course has now trained more than 200 seminary students about power and leadership. This program distinguishes between coercive power, in which individuals impose their will on others, and collaborative power, in which groups of leaders are able to act on their shared values for the common good. We believe that real leaders

We teach that in order to be effective, they need to identify, nurture, and mentor leaders, so that they can create an expanding network of leaders capable of moving a community. We teach them how to foster relationships among leaders, so that they can identify areas of shared concern and act together. We teach them how to be strategic, how to act effectively and collectively. Perhaps most important, we teach them that leaders develop habits of reflection, evaluation, and feedback so we are in a regular practice of improvement in our ability to have an impact. In essence, we teach them to invest deeply in their leaders in order to grow their power and grow the power of others.



Many of us have experienced what it feels like to believe passionately in a vision, but to be powerless to carry it out. Such was the case in 2004 for Rabbi Stephanie Kolin, then a student at HUC-JIR in New York and the coordinator of the campus Soup Kitchen. In that role, she and her colleagues supplied food and clothing to hundreds of low income and homeless people in New York City. One icy January night, one gentleman asked her if they had a winter coat for him. He had been arrested that week for public urination, local establishments closing their doors to him in this most basic need. And when he was taken to jail, they imposed a blanket policy on him, taking his shoelaces and cutting the strings on his jacket, in case he was a suicide risk. His jacket could no longer be cinched tight and flapped in the wind, useless. Worried about his state of mind, Rabbi Kolin asked him if he was feeling suicidal and he answered: “Lady, I just had to go.” The volunteers found him a jacket, but the unfairness of the moment was profound.

The HUC-JIR Soup Kitchen, indeed all soup kitchens, are serving a need that is urgent and sacred. Yet they do not allow us to act on the prophetic call to systemically alleviate poverty and injustice. What any of us who have a vision of a more just world need - is power. Leaders of religious communities need the ability to act effectively in order to animate their values in the public sphere.

have power because they have organized people with them who come together in large enough numbers to have an impact.

At the same time, Rabbi Jonah Pesner worked with community organizer Lila Foldes to launch the Union for Reform Judaism’s “Just Congregations” initiative to engage rabbis and leaders in our congregations around these same principles. Both “Just Congregations” and the “Leadership for Public Life” course, now collaborating to support more than 150 Reform congregations, are built around the model of “congregation-based community organizing” (CBCO). Based on the ideas of Saul Alinsky, who founded the Industrial Areas Foundation in 1940, CBCO teaches that having the power to act is our birthright, that people have the power to change their circumstances when they come together in shared purpose. Therefore, leaders need to learn how to “organize” their communities. In other words, to be effective, to have the power to make real change, we need to learn how to build a base of leaders inside of our communities who are able to articulate a shared vision and then act together.

We teach leaders how to realize their vision by engaging others to join them in their work. And these leaders, when they organize such a base of people with sufficient collective power, are able to build a more just world; in truth, they are also able to change structures of religious education, worship practices, or other priorities of Jewish communal life.

**Congregation-based community organizing in action: Temple Israel of Boston fighting for equal marriage protection, and working together with their Greater Boston Interfaith Organization partners in support of health care access and financial reform.**

So why *does* the Jewish community need rabbis, cantors, educators, and Jewish nonprofit leaders to be powerful? What is at stake?

We believe powerful Jewish educators understand *how* to transform their institutions into communities of learners. Powerful cantors are able to transform worship patterns and change lifecycle rituals for the good, because they know *how* to engage their constituency for change. Powerful rabbis aren’t satisfied with sermons; they successfully mobilize their congregations to act effectively in the world. Powerful Jewish leaders succeed in translating our sacred text-based vision of a better world into a reality.

Several years after ordination, Rabbi Kolin and her team of leaders at Temple Israel in Boston (where Rabbi Pesner had begun the community organizing work years earlier) heard from many congregants that their children were the victims of bullying. They decided to gather some parents together to see if this was, in fact, a pervasive issue. One by one, the parents shared their stories. Their child was being bullied, or their child was a bully, and they didn’t know what to do. Through those conversations, they decided that

*(continued on next page)*

# Moses Supports and Defends the People

Dr. Norman J. Cohen, N '71, Ph.D. '77; Professor of Midrash, HUC-JIR/New York

As Moses himself matures, he develops a very realistic picture of the people and their ability, and as their leader does not hesitate to communicate that directly to God. He recognizes their limitations and expects of them only what they are capable of doing. He knows that they need boundaries so they will not ascend the mountain against God's will and draw closer to the Divine, as he reminds God, "The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai" (19:23). He, therefore, will have to serve as their intermediary before the Divine, conveying God's words to them and their words to the Divine.

When Moses brings the people's words back to God (19:8), the Rabbis stress that Moses reviews their words so that he understands their deeper significance and can convey that to God. Like all great leaders, he sees his task as truly understanding his followers and representing their real needs.

Looking closely at the biblical text, it seems redundant: Moses reports the people's response to God twice. First, we are told that he "brought [*va-yashev*] back the people's words" (19:8), and in the very next verse we read, "Then Moses reported [*va-yageid*] the people's words" (19:9). Playing on this seeming repetition, though focusing on the use of two distinct verbs, the Rabbis emphasize two different points. On the one hand, Moses reports to God the Israelites' commitment to God: They will do all that God commands (19:8). All previous doubts about the people's belief seem to have disappeared, and Moses, overwhelmed by the people's response, assures God of their fidelity.

Yet Moses senses that the people, deep inside, are still afraid and they may have some lingering doubts, which will not be overcome by simply hearing God's words from him. He intuitively feels that the Israelites need two things: to hear the commandments directly from the Divine and to be worthy of experiencing God's presence, that is, of seeing God. Moses not only reports their words to God, but brings back much more: He conveys a clear sense of what the People of Israel desperately need. And God ac-

cedes to both requests. First, God promises, "The people will hear when I speak with you" (19:9), and then God adds, "On the third day, the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people" (19:11). Every leader must truly hear his followers, understand their individual concerns, and then try to respond to them. More than the willingness to open himself to the people and listen to them, a leader must convey their concerns to those who can respond in a serious way to the issues troubling them.

Moses is devoted to the People of Israel, and they are the sole focus of his life and mission. We recognize this when the text says, "Moses came down from the mountain to the people and warned the people to stay pure" (19:14). The words "to the people" (*el ha-am*) seem superfluous. All we need to know is that "Moses came down ... and warned the people." However, the added reference that he comes directly to the people is picked up in a variety of *midrashim*, in which the Rabbis note that instead of attending to his own personal needs after the experience with the Divine on the mountain, Moses immediately turns to his people. He rushes to tell them of God's words and directives. And this is not merely the case when the Torah is about to be given; it occurs on every occasion in which God communicates something to Moses. Moses's authority depends on fulfilling his mission for the People of Israel. ■

Excerpted from *Moses and the Journey to Leadership: Timeless Lessons of Effective Management from the Bible to Today's Leaders*, by Dr. Norman J. Cohen (Jewish Lights Publishing; p. 106-108).

**Leonard Everett Fisher, *Moses*, acrylic on paper, 1995; on view in "Leonard Everett Fisher: 70 Years an Artist," presented by the Irma L. and Abram S. Croll Center for Jewish Learning and Culture at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion Museum/New York.**



## The Ability to Act: Teaching Jewish Leadership and Power

(continued from page 27)

they needed to act. They found other parents who shared this burden and ultimately came together around a piece of legislation that would seriously address bullying throughout Massachusetts. Unfortunately, they quickly learned that it was being strongly opposed by the school superintendants and was about to be defeated.

Alone, each parent, each child, was powerless, but together this group of parents not only got the most comprehensive anti-bullying legislation in Massachusetts passed, but at the last second, when it was about

to be watered down to ineffectiveness by the state Senate, they flooded the offices of the legislators with over 100 phone calls and got an even stronger version of the bill passed than was first proposed. And so parents who one day felt powerless to protect even their own children, the next day acted together to protect every student across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. And a team of leaders that had the capacity to act on their vision of a better world emerged out of this group of temple members.

Like this team, hundreds of leaders in Jewish communi-

ties throughout North America, Israel, and the world don't just yearn to have an impact; more and more they are learning how to organize their communities to realize that yearning to become the sacred embodiment of the Jewish values we know they have the capacity to be. Jewish professionals are partnering with their lay leadership to teach each other how to enact a vision of the world as it should be and, in doing so, are redefining what it means to be a leader in our communities. And together, we are creating a powerful movement of leaders who can transform our collective visions into a reality one step closer to redemption. ■

# Changing Leaders/Leading Change

Rabbi Elka Abrahamson, N '85; President, The Wexner Foundation

**M**y Jewish leadership journey was born and nurtured at a small Jewish summer camp in the 1970's. I was easily convinced to lead from the front and was called upon often to rally campers into a wild frenzy of songs and cheers. But as I grew from counselor to unit head, and finally to the program director of a large URJ (then UAHC) camp, I had to work more purposefully through the challenges of integrating my natural leadership instincts with the studied art of leading effectively. I had to admit that the natural talent that got me "here," to a position of conferred authority, would not get me "there," to exercising transformative Jewish leadership in an established and successful organization. While my dreams of becoming a rabbi during those summer days were just emerging, the challenges of leadership presented to me at camp represented, in the words of author and leadership theorist Warren Bennis, my crucible moments.

Crucibles, Bennis teaches, are emotionally charged situations that produce great learning and growth within leaders. Those who exercise Jewish leadership do well to reflect on their own experiences that shape their understanding of why... and how they lead. I entered HUC-JIR imagining myself as an informal Jewish educator and left certain I would take my camping sensibilities into the congregation, generating a new model of synagogue life. I never – ever – saw myself as an organizational rabbi, least of all one positioned in a Foundation focused on the strengthening of Jewish leadership for the Jewish world, across the denomination spectrum, for both volunteers and professional leaders in North America and Israel.

And yet, The Wexner Foundation is an ideal, indeed invigorating setting for my rabbinate. Our staff is comprised of a team of Jewish professionals who study and teach leadership, especially through our three leadership initiatives, the Wexner Graduate Fellowship/Davidson Scholars Program, the Wexner Heritage Program, and the Wexner Israel Fellowship. Each initiative has its own focus and tailored curriculum but all are

founded upon the belief that leadership can be taught, leadership skills can be honed, and that those who successfully exercise leadership are on a constant quest to, in the words of our chairman and founder Leslie Wexner, "know their stuff."

A distinct view of leadership animates the work of The Wexner Foundation. First and foremost, we strive to serve the many different expressions of Jewish life with a uniform sincerity. We aspire to a broad embracing of Jewish diversity and, after twenty-five years, believe that we have become an important model organization in this regard. Our programs foster a steadfast respect for diversity. We regard this diversity as a strength in Jewish life. We intentionally construct our seminars as safe spaces or "holding environments" for addressing differences openly and honestly.

The Foundation's methodology of developing leaders relies heavily upon building cohorts of individuals, intentionally diverse, who bond together, develop trust, and serve to strengthen each other through continuous contact. Each cohort represents a microcosm of the larger Jewish community and group members navigate complicated relationships across substantive differences.

We seek understanding, not consensus. We place a high value on self-knowledge, emotional intelligence, and mastering reflective practice within the group. We intentionally urge patience, curiosity, imagination, and humility within each Wexner cohort and expect dilemmas, both those internal to the group and those of the wider Jewish world, to be tackled by the group itself, "bottom up thinking," rather than reliance upon any authority figures to provide "top down" answers to thorny problems. We believe that the best work is produced by a Wexner cohort group when they take it upon themselves. This is consistent with the Foundation's belief that leadership is fundamentally collaborative, that it should be vision and values driven, and that leadership entails mobilizing others to achieve meaningful and visionary change.



Our view of leadership also encompasses the idea that, within the Jewish world, all leaders are most effective when they engage in lifelong Jewish learning. While the connection between Jewish learning and Jewish leading is intrinsic to our work, we value the field of leadership as a rigorous discipline unto itself. Leslie and Abigail Wexner spearheaded the development of the Center for Public Leadership at The Kennedy School of Government at Harvard and thus we benefit from close relationships with and guidance from outstanding leadership thinkers and theorists.

We optimistically champion resilience and change. Many of our alumni are founders or directors of outstanding innovative organizations and cutting-edge initiatives. We embrace invention and reinvention of Jewish life and are committed to the support and continued growth of Wexner alumni through ongoing conversations, classes, think tanks, networks, e-newsletters, and conferences. The relationships and interactions among the constituents of our three leadership initiatives are quite precious. Wexner alumni experience a keen sense of belonging to an extended Wexner family, a web of highly diverse individuals who are eager to energize Jewish life. My rabbinate has been energized in much the same fashion.

My optimism for the Jewish world is ever-increasing and my view of that world is ever-expanding. And still, from time to time, I find myself in front of a highly diverse Jewish community leading a song I learned back at summer camp. ■

## The Advanced M.A. Program for Pluralistic Jewish Education *(continued from page 13)*

and consideration of other points of view. Students are encouraged to recognize the influence of different ideologies in the Jewish world on educational choices.

The third principle is **the development of reflective abilities**. Reflection is a tool for organizing knowledge, not only for students but also for educators. Studying academic content out of its educational context may be a futile exercise, so our program provides opportunities for systematically scrutinizing educational practices and aims. This is achieved by a range of techniques, including what might be termed reflective assignments. In addition to the academic studies, each student keeps a reflective diary, in which they describe their experiences in the field of Jewish education and examine their practices in light of theories we studied, their values, and vision.

The fourth principle is creating a **community of colleagues** who learn together and experience the challenges of pluralistic Jewish education. Along with its strong intellectual and academic dimensions, the program offers students opportunities to experience and to question the meaning of pluralism. A learning community turns its participants into active learners, researchers, and like-minded partners with their colleagues and teachers. A community of colleagues that actively experiences different Jewish lifestyles creates a kind of living laboratory.

The students in our program don't only learn about dilemmas related to challenges of Jewish educational pluralism – they are invited to experience

these dilemmas through experiential group learning. We open our day of study with a group activity directed at issues of prayer and faith. We spend Shabbat together and, in preparation, students from a range of different backgrounds are involved in choos-

ing how the heterogeneous group will observe Shabbat. This inevitably brings them to examine the limits of their openness as well as their ability to compromise in order to create communal viability.

**Leaders must be prepared to take risks.** They need to challenge societal expectations in order to be able to offer change. Our program invites students to take risks, be critical, take a stand, and develop their ability to lead and forge a vision even in challenging situations. If Israel is to have leaders who will promote a pluralistic approach, institutions like HUC-JIR need to continue to do the complicated and painstaking business of taking risks. Not to do this work would be the greater risk. ■

**Students in the Advanced M.A. Program for Pluralistic Jewish Education at HUC-JIR/Jerusalem.**



**In the words of the Israeli thinker Zvi Lamm, "educational decisions are ideological choices." We challenge students to think about their own choices.**

# From the Battlefield to the Bimah: Examining the Traverse from Military to Congregational Leadership

Joshua Knobel, RHSOE '12, L '14, Captain, U.S. Army (Reserve)

**“To be a 21st-century leader, you must have two things – competence and character.”**

When I consider my ongoing trip from the military to the rabbinate, I remember these words from General Norman Schwarzkopf’s 1991 speech at the United States Military Academy. While Schwarzkopf’s message appears beguiling in its simplicity, he speaks of a complex reality, one which urges any leader to live simultaneously in two distinct worlds.

In the first world, a commander looks at her company and sees a company – a group of soldiers assembled to accomplish the mission at hand. That commander observes an entire battlefield, directing subordinate units as they perform the myriad coordinated tasks required of a combined arms team, all at the proper time, place, and intensity. That commander pores over training schedules, operations orders, and mission reports.

Similarly, a rabbi looks at his congregation and sees a congregation – a community committed to prayer, tradition, education, and repairing the world. That rabbi looks on from the *bimah*, providing direction and meaning. That rabbi remembers the corpus of Jewish tradition, providing the Jewish community with a link to the past and a vision for the future. That rabbi often coordinates programs, schools, and services.

In the second world, however, a commander looks at her company and sees one hundred individuals – each with fully realized human hopes and dreams, each with the desire to live a meaningful life and benefit one’s family and one’s country. That commander sees not a battlefield, but a foxhole. Instead of a team mission, that commander focuses upon individual tasks – sandbags to fill, rifles to clean, holes to dig, open fields to cross, bullets to dodge. Instead of coordination, that commander concentrates upon inspiration – children to raise, wives and husbands to satisfy, and dreams to fulfill.

Likewise, a rabbi looks at his congregation and sees individuals – each with fully realized human hopes and dreams, each with the desire to live a meaningful life and benefit one’s family and one’s people. That rabbi looks on, not from the *bimah*, but from the pew. Instead of tradition, that rabbi focuses upon the challenges of everyday life. Instead of coordination, that rabbi concentrates upon inspiration, remembering just how difficult it can be to choose between baseball games and Sunday school, between an evening’s rest and Shabbat services, between *Yom Tov* and earning the day’s wage.

Although the rabbi and the commander possess drastically different responsibilities, we share the responsibility to live in both worlds. We share the obligation to develop both competence and character, knowing that each represents a difficult and enduring task. The first requires us to relentlessly hone our knowledge, skills, and abilities. The latter requires us to constantly regard the world through the eyes of another, to delay our ingrained sense of right and wrong in order to choose a higher morality. As such, I find that my journey from the battlefield to the *bimah* remains only as successful as my journey from the foxhole to the pew. ■

*Rabbinical/education student Joshua Knobel, a native of Exeter, Pennsylvania, graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 2001 and served as a telecommunications officer in the U.S. Army for seven years. His assignments included deployments as platoon leader in Kuwait (2003-04) and as a company commander in Afghanistan (2007-08).*

## The Rabbi Richard S. Sternberger Endowed Scholarship Fund for Military Chaplaincy

The Rabbi Richard S. Sternberger Endowed Scholarship Fund has been established to support the studies of a rabbinical or cantorial student preparing for military chaplaincy. This scholarship fund was created by a bequest from Rabbi Sternberger, z”l, a 1952 ordinee of HUC-JIR’s Cincinnati campus, and was formally announced at a meeting of the HUC-JIR Board of Governors on June 13, 2011 by Rabbi Laszlo Berkowits, Founding Rabbi of Temple Rodef Shalom in Falls Church, where Rabbi Sternberger served for many years as Adjunct Rabbi, and Sam Simon, a congregant and friend of Rabbi Sternberger and member of HUC-JIR’s Eastern Region Board of Overseers.

Rabbi Ellenson stated, “Rabbi Sternberger was an esteemed alumnus of the College-Institute, whose life and career were dedicated to the Reform Movement, the Jewish people, and the larger world. His staunch advocacy on behalf of civil rights took him to Mississippi during the summer of 1964 to register African-American voters, and his commitment to equality and social justice remained a significant cause for the duration of his life. As a Navy Chaplain for three decades, serving in Korea and as Jewish chaplain at the Pentagon and the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, he brought counseling and comfort to enlisted men and women of all faiths. His leadership of the Union for Reform Judaism’s New Jersey Council, New York Federation of Reform Synagogues, Mid-Atlantic Council, and Department of Small Congregations strengthened the vitality of congregations and communities in those regions and throughout North America, while his pulpit rabbinate was imbued with devotion to his congregants. Rabbi Sternberger’s exemplary rabbinate will endure as a source of inspiration to our students for generations to come.”

A native Philadelphian, Rabbi Sternberger received his B.A. in Philosophy from the University of Pennsylvania (1947) and pursued graduate study at Johns Hopkins University and Columbia University. He received the honorary Doctor of Divinity degree in 1977 from HUC-JIR.



Rabbi Richard S. Sternberger, z”l



Rabbi Sternberger served as a Navy Chaplain on active duty in Korea (1952-54) and continued as a reserve Chaplain for thirty years, reaching the ranks of Captain in the U.S. Naval Reserve and commanding officer of the U.S.N.R.’s Washington Chaplains Company. He served as a spiritual leader of Baltimore Hebrew Congregation (1954-58), the Jewish Community Center (today known as Kol Ami) in White Plains, NY (1958-67), and then went on to work for the Union for Reform Judaism until his retirement in 1991. During his years in Washington, he served as an adjunct rabbi at Temple Rodef Shalom in Falls Church, VA. Also during that time, he helped to form Temple Bat Yam in Ocean City, Maryland, and later, upon his retirement from the URJ, became its first rabbi.

Rabbi Sternberger served as Chairman of the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights during the 1970’s and organized an AIDS education campaign in the 1980’s. In addition to being active in civil rights, Rabbi Sternberger was a major force in NFTY, the Reform Movement’s youth organization. He cared deeply about Jewish camping. He was also committed to supporting ARZA, the Reform Movement’s Zionist arm, and other causes in Israel. ■

(above and left) Rabbi Heather Borshof, N '10, in action as a U.S. Army Chaplain.

# A Name and a Journey

**David Vaisberg, NYSOE '10, N '12, Mandel Fellow**

David Vaisberg recently returned from a trip to Thies, Senegal, with American Jewish World Service (AJWS), where he was one of twenty rabbinical students volunteering in the village of Ker Daouda Cisse and studying Jewish and academic texts relating to poverty and giving.



**N**ames are believed to hold great power; changing a name can mean a change of fate. Indeed, the following two names have, in a way, altered the course of my own path.

## Mbai

At our arrival to Ker Daouda Cisse, we were welcomed with song and dance by the whole village. To officially bring us into their community, individual villagers came up to each one of us and gave us the gift of their African name. Mbai, a village leader, found me, and for two weeks I became a part of his family. Mbai is kind, hardworking, and full of laughter. Relative to his fellow villagers, Mbai is wealthy. This means a large family compound, which consists of a courtyard with a floor of sand, surrounded by bedrooms, each made of concrete bricks and with corrugated tin roofs. Some had windows, and some had solid doors (instead of ragged curtains), but none had screens or malaria nets. Mbai and the other villagers live a rich, communally oriented, and cultured life. And yet, Mbai and his community live in a constant struggle for survival against poverty and the elements.

## Solulo

One day, an adorable little six-year-old boy seemed to adopt me as a surrogate parent. In a year, Solulo will begin learning at the elementary school, where close to 80 children may be packed into one of the village's three classrooms. Senegal's education system is degrading, with a shortage of paper and pencils, and well-trained teachers a scarce commodity. When asked why they wanted electricity, the villagers responded that they wanted lights in their homes so the children could study at night. What the adults of Ker Daouda Cisse want is a better life for their children.

Many of us on the trip came to Senegal looking to learn about impoverished Sub-Saharan communities, where people live on less than one dollar a day, and the NGOs that seek to ameliorate and empower them. We hoped to learn more about ourselves through texts and conversation.

Tostan, the grass-roots NGO that hosted us, is but one of the more than 350 grassroots organizations in the developing world that is funded by AJWS. It has helped this community and many others by running an

**David Vaisberg with the children of Ker Daouda Cisse during his American Jewish World Service rabbinical student mission to Senegal.**

education program that effectively teaches human rights, literacy, and professional skills. Through community-led development in the local language, they have also helped implement sustainable follow-up programs, and have been quite successful in ending female genital cutting. Additionally, Tostan is responsible for significant improvements in child and maternal mortality rates.

In addition to helping build a classroom, our group studied texts from across the tradition. As we explored questions addressing our circles of responsibility, we determined that we have an obligation to those who live beyond our community borders. We studied texts that command us not only to give, but also to loan and better enable those in need of aid.

Ultimately, we learned that the best way to help them – the Mbais and the Solulos – is to empower them to make a better life for themselves. ■

# A Rabbi's First Act

**Rabbi Heath Watenmaker, SJNM '06, L '11; Reform Outreach Rabbi, Hillel at Rutgers University**

**I** imagine that not many people can say their first act as a rabbi was to become a father. But I can.

In his Ordination Address, Rabbi Ellenson spoke about ordination as a personally and spiritually transformational experience. Having worked and studied for the last five years (or seven counting the Jewish Non-profit Management program and eleven counting my time taking classes at HUC-JIR as an undergraduate at USC), I had long imagined the awesome power of this day and spent a great deal of time considering what it would mean on a personal and spiritual level to take on the mantle of rabbi. What I didn't know as I sat listening to Rabbi Ellenson's words that morning, was that my wife, then nine months pregnant, was sitting twenty rows behind me quietly entering the beginning stages of labor.

Our beautiful son, Ilan Theodor, was born at 11:19 PM. In keeping with the Jewish theme of the day, he

measured 6 lbs. 13 oz. and 18 inches tall. Everyone was healthy, happy, and incredibly tired after spending an entire day in what can only be described as an extended state of great joy. To think that my time at HUC-JIR – where I met and fell in love with my wife, during our studies in the School of Jewish Nonprofit Management, engaged in soul-stirring learning, and grew as a leader of my community – would end with the birth of my first child, on the day of my rabbinical ordination, seems as if it was somehow pre-determined.

On the morning of the day Ilan was born, I stood with Rabbi Ellenson, wrapped in a *tallit* I had bought in Jerusalem during my first year of rabbinical school, as I was welcomed as a rabbi among the Jewish people. On his eighth day, Ilan was wrapped in that same *tallit* as he entered the holy, age-old Covenant between God and the Jewish people. ■



**Rabbi Heath Watenmaker; Amy Watenmaker, SJNM/MSW '06, DeLet '09, and their son Ilan.**



ברכותינו  
 הנאמנות לשנת  
 שלום ושפע  
 Wishing You a  
 Happy, Healthy,  
 and Peaceful  
 5772

Nathan Hilu, *Shanah Tovah*, from "Nathan Hilu's Journal: Word, Image, Memory," presented by the Irma L. and Abram S. Croll Center for Jewish Learning and Culture at the HUC-JIR Museum/New York.



**At the White House reception for Jewish American Heritage Month in May 2011, Dr. Gary P. Zola shows Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz the Medal of Honor given to Civil War hero David Urbansky. This medal, preserved at the AJA, is believed to be the oldest surviving Medal of Honor given to an American Jew. Dr. Zola was recently appointed by President Obama to the Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad – established to encourage the preservation and protection of the cemeteries, monuments, and historic buildings associated with the foreign heritage of United States citizens. Dr. Zola is the first member of HUC-JIR's faculty to receive a presidential appointment.**

**D**r. Jacob Rader Marcus (1896-1995) established the American Jewish Archives (AJA) in 1947 to preserve the continuity of Jewish life and learning in the aftermath of the Holocaust. Today, the AJA has become the world's largest free-standing archival research center dedicated exclusively to the study of the American Jewish experience. Its 12,000 linear feet of catalogued collections contains robust documentary evidence of the history of North American Jewry, including iconic holdings that are essential to the world's understanding of American history.

The AJA is a global learning center for rabbis, scholars, educators, researchers, and students of numerous academic disciplines. Through the strategic development of a range of innovative programs, outreach structures, and leading technologies, The Marcus Center – and its treasured resources – are now poised to inspire coming generations with the fascinating stories of Jewish life in North America.

## The American Jewish Archives: Leading the Way in Preserving American Jewish History

**Rabbi Gary P. Zola, C '82, Ph.D. '91;**

*Executive Director, The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives;  
 Professor of the American Jewish Experience, HUC-JIR/Cincinnati*

The AJA's burgeoning Fellowship program now includes more than 350 scholars –academic leaders of the future – from over 20 countries. While interacting with peer researchers and HUC-JIR faculty, Fellows – primarily Ph.D. candidates – are immersed in the discovery of rich perspectives on the past and inspiring portraits of American Jewish leadership.

Recently, the AJA began offering a series of leadership development programs for high school and college students who are interested in learning about the American Jewish experience. Many of these young people will become leaders of the Reform Movement in the years ahead. Six specialized programs provide unique, campus-based Jewish learning opportunities that are drawn from the archival stacks and led by HUC-JIR's dynamic faculty and students. The students have a chance to "stand on the shoulders of giants," and gain a greater understanding of the roles that their Jewish forbears have played in shaping the course of history on the North American continent.

The AJA's historically significant collections – and their capacity to advance the understanding of American Jewish history and the American nation as a whole – continue to enhance the College-Institute:

- In 2011 the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) – under the auspices of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) – selected the AJA from among many other highly respected applicants to receive a prestigious grant to increase public accessibility to the AJA's records documenting the broad scope of American Jewish society. Funding provided by NHPRC's Basic Processing of Historically Significant Records Project will be devoted to processing the papers and records of rabbis, synagogues, social groups, individuals, and organizations that reflect the history of American Jewish life.
- In 2011 the AJA was selected to preserve and disseminate the records of the internationally renowned Mandel Supporting Foundations, established by Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel of Cleveland, Ohio, to foster non-profit organizational leadership through innovative education programming.

- The website of the American Jewish Archives was selected for inclusion in the Library of Congress's 'Single Site' Project in 2010 – underscoring the historical significance of the AJA's holdings.

The vast scholarly resources of the AJA are now utilized in ways previously unimagined – from international distance learning programs via the Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati International Learning Center's electronic classroom to the digitization of expansive collections and extensive online resources. These resources include the entire run of the *AJA Journal*, the papers of Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, and digitized copies of editorials from the *American Israelite* during the years that Wise was the paper's editor (1854-1900). Increasingly, access to the AJA's remarkable holdings is merely a click away.

Outreach programs for laity – including the AJA's popular "Travels in American Jewish History" program – provide opportunities to learn about world events, historical figures, and fascinating eras in American Jewish history.

David Ben Gurion said that, "We Jews cannot live in the past, but the past must live in us." Indeed, the American Jewish Archives illuminates our storied past in order to create an even brighter future.

Visit [AmericanJewishArchives.org](http://AmericanJewishArchives.org) to explore the treasures of American Jewish life. ■

### The Chronicle

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