

# THE **FALL 2017** Chronicle



**INNOVATION DRIVING THE JEWISH FUTURE**

Alumni and Students in Action throughout  
North America, Israel, and the World

**HEBREW  
UNION  
COLLEGE**  
JEWISH  
INSTITUTE  
OF RELIGION

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

Celebrating Hanukkah each year bespeaks our own rededication to both longstanding Jewish tradition, and a Jewish spiritual, intellectual, and cultural renaissance taking place in our own time.

Fostering that renaissance are the thousands of students and alumni of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion who engage with you – their congregants and the youngest emerging generations – wherever you are. Our alumni and students not only sustain Judaism's tradition and values but apply creativity and insight to our tradition to renew and transform it.

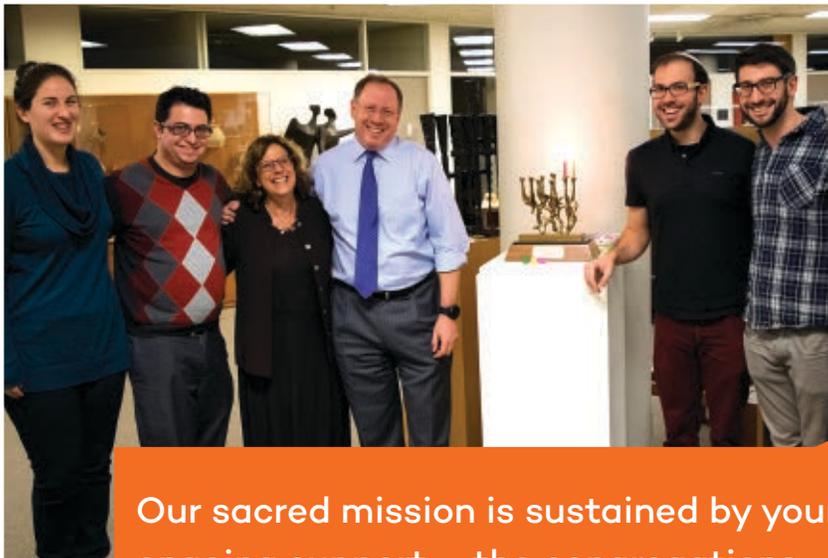
In this issue of *The Chronicle*, you will see your professional Jewish leaders in action—innovating, educating, guiding, and inspiring you, your families, your communities, the Reform Movement, and the Jewish people in dynamic synergy with the real world.

From protesting against neo-Nazis in Charlottesville, VA, (pages 4-5) and aiding those devastated by the hurricanes in Puerto Rico, Texas, and the Virgin Islands (pages 6-7), to fighting for the pluralistic future of the State of Israel (page 2-3) or building peace at the United Nations (pages 20-21), our alumni and students are there.

Whether celebrating Jewish life in congregations, large and small (pages 16-17, 29), galvanizing their communities to rescue refugees (pages 14-15), comforting those in need of healing (page 25), or supporting the military (pages 22-23) and law enforcement personnel (pages 10-12) who defend our nation, they are there.

Our visionary leaders are engaging unaffiliated Millennials (page 24) and Jewish students on college campuses (page 13), pioneering post-high school, pre-college gap year social justice programs (pages 18-19), initiating new Jewish arts and sci-tech summer camps for kids (pages 8-9), and applying entrepreneurial approaches to Jewish education, worship, inclusion, and outreach (page 28).

Our campuses are dynamic laboratories for discovery and learning (pages 34-37), guided by our extraordinary faculty's scholarship, publications, teaching, and mentorship (pages 40-43). Their thought leadership emanates into your synagogue, academe, and the larger world through our major public conferences like the Symposium (pages 34-36) and our College Commons courses for congregations and Bully Pulpit podcasts on topical issues (pages 42, 45).



Our sacred mission is sustained by your ongoing support – the congregations of the Union for Reform Judaism, Women of Reform Judaism, and the many generous donors who share our vision for a vital Jewish future.

Celebrating Hanukkah: (from left) Rabbi Emily Langowitz '17; Rabbi Josh Fixler '17; Dr. Evie Rotstein, Director, New York School of Education; Rabbi Aaron Panken; Rabbi Daniel Moss '17; and Rabbi Daniel Reiser '16.

Our sacred mission is sustained by your ongoing support – the congregations of the Union for Reform Judaism, the Women of Reform Judaism, and the many generous donors who share our vision for a vital Jewish future. Thank you for your faith in the indispensable roles that Jewish leaders – rabbis, cantors, educators, Jewish nonprofit executives, and scholars – play in making this a better world, today and for the generations to come.

Each year, Hanukkah brings light to the darkest times and places, dispersing the darkness and bringing joy. Our work, with your gracious support, does just that, all year round. May it always be so.

With heartfelt thanks and wishes for a joyful Hanukkah blessed with peace,

Rabbi Aaron D. Panken '91, Ph.D., President

# ORDINATION OF THE 100TH GRADUATE OF THE ISRAELI RABBINICAL PROGRAM

“ Israel is a country awash with rabbis. What difference can one hundred more make? A great difference. We find graduates of HUC-JIR’s Israeli Rabbinical Program at some of the most significant settings within Israeli society. They serve as leaders in informal and formal education; as school principals and directors of early childhood education systems. They run large institutions, and bring congregations to life around Israel. Their voices are heard in the corridors of

power, in print, broadcast, and social media, and in hospital rooms and family moments. They provide leadership, solace, support, and vision. They are part of a remarkable movement of Jewish renewal currently unfolding - alongside all the challenges and conflicts - in contemporary Israel. From the border with Lebanon to the shores of the Red Sea, in makeshift structures and impressive edifices, this first one hundred is preparing the groundwork for the hundreds to follow in their illustrious footsteps. They have established congregations and institutions,



## In the Footsteps of 11 Generations of Rabbis

**RABBI LEORA  
EZRAHI-VERED '17**

### EDUCATION:

B.A. and M.A. from Tel Aviv University

### LEGACY:

- Daughter of first woman to be ordained a rabbi in Israel, Rabbi Naamah Kelman '92, Dean of the Taube Family Campus, HUC-JIR/Jerusalem.
- Great-granddaughter of Rabbi Felix Levy '37, President of the Central Conference of American Rabbis who helped overturn the anti-Zionist sentiments codified in the Pittsburgh Platform of 1885 with the passage of the Columbus Platform of 1937.

- Granddaughter of Rabbi Wolfe Kelman, Executive Director of the Conservative Movement’s Rabbinical Assembly, who helped professionalize the American rabbinate and paved the way for the ordination of women.
- Close to her family’s large *haredi* contingent.

### LEADER:

- National Director of Noar Telem (Israeli Reform youth organization).
- Headed Reform *mechinah* in Jaffa.
- Officer in Israel Defense Forces.
- Community service in youth village for kids from Ethiopia and Russia.

### ISRAELI RABBINICAL PROGRAM:

“My classmates grew up secular, Orthodox, or religious Reform, are of different ages and from different places in Israel, but found their center in Reform ideology. I value the connection with the North American students worshipping and studying with us. It is very meaningful to form friendships with colleagues who will be leaders throughout Israel and around the world, so that our communities will one day become friends too.”

### PIONEER:

- Student rabbi at Beit Tefilah Israeli in Tel Aviv, the first liberal community to organize Kabbalat Shabbat and build a communal sukkah at the port of Tel Aviv, drawing over 50,000 Israelis.
- Rabbinical intern at Tzur Hadassah.
- Rabbi of Nigun Halev in Kibbutz Gvat in Emek Israel.

*“Being a congregational rabbi in Israel is an amazing platform to effect significant impact on our larger society.”*

written articles and books, infused communities with meaning, and organized social campaigns. Seventy years after the creation of the State, these men and women are taking an active role in the creation of a new language of non-Orthodox Jewish commitment and creativity.”

**Rabbi Michael Marmor, Ph.D., Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Provost**



The Ordination Class of the 100th Graduate of the Israeli Rabbinical Program: (from left) Rabbi Yair Tobias '17, Leora Ezrahi-Vered '17, Rinat Safania-Shwartz '17, and David Laor '17

#### **ACTIVIST:**

- Elected Councilwoman for her community of 8,000 residents.
- Created pluralistic public kindergarten, supported by Modern Orthodox residents, and helped them when they wanted to create their mikvah. “What we all do now will affect how our community will be when it grows to 20,000 residents in a few years. We are partnering with secular, Orthodox, Reform, and Modern Orthodox to build a pluralistic community.”

#### **VISION:**

“Being a congregational rabbi is an amazing platform to effect significant impact on individuals, a community, and the larger society. I want to change people’s opinions, have a say on everything in Israeli society from the economy and the Israel-Arab relationship to recreating Jewish traditions, widen pluralistic circles, and dispel the ignorant notion that there is only secular identity or Orthodoxy here. My family provided me with a model of pluralism in action – that’s my vision for the world.”

## FIGHTING FOR ISRAEL’S FUTURE

**Rabbi Noa Sattath '14, Director of the Israel Religious Action Center (IRAC) housed in the Rabbi Amy and Gary Perlin Offices at our Taube Family Campus in Jerusalem, exemplifies the impact of the 100 Israeli Reform rabbis ordained in our Israeli Rabbinical Program. She is guiding IRAC’s mission to:**



- / Fight religious extremism and gender segregation in the public domain**
- / Combat racism and advance a shared society between Jews and Arabs in Israel**
- / Secure equal status for all streams of Judaism in Israel**
- / Battle anti-democratic legislation in Israel**
- / Contest policies and discriminatory benefits that discourage the participation of the ultra-Orthodox community in the Israeli workforce**

“My work at IRAC allows me to dedicate my life to bringing the values of our Movement into the political reality of Israel. As I work to build partnerships with Arab activists, Orthodox feminists, Ethiopian and Mizrahi Jews, and the LGBT community, I demonstrate our profound commitment to fulfilling our mission. I believe that making our Movement and our values heard in the Israeli Supreme Court, in the Knesset, and in the streets, is always a victory.”

# ALUMNI IN ACTION

## CHARLOTTESVILLE: STANDING TOGETHER IN STRENGTH

Rabbi Rachel Schmelkin '16, Rabbi Educator, Congregation Beth Israel, Charlottesville, VA



**The Unite the Right rally, organized by white supremacists and neo-Nazis in Charlottesville, VA, on August 11-12 to demonstrate against the removal of a statue of Robert E. Lee, erupted into violence, resulting in the death of Heather D. Heyer and the wounding of 34 other counter protesters. Rabbi Schmelkin describes the impact of these events on the Jewish community of Charlottesville.**

### **Our Synagogue**

Founded in 1882, Congregation Beth Israel is the oldest continuously utilized synagogue in Virginia and among the twenty oldest continuously utilized synagogues in the United States. As the only synagogue in town, we serve as the center for Jewish life. We have about 370 families and 170 children in the religious school.

### **Advance Preparation**

Rabbi Thomas A. Gutherz '93 and I are very involved in interfaith clergy activities through the Charlottesville

Clergy Collective, which was proactively formed in the wake of the church shooting in South Carolina in June 2015. Over the summer I joined Congregate Charlottesville, a smaller group of interfaith clergy preparing for nonviolent direct action leading up to August 12.

### **At the Synagogue**

Our congregants wanted to know what we would be doing and where we were going to be that day in order to figure out what they should do. We told them, but encouraged each congregant to deflect hate in their own way. Some congregants wanted to confront and bear witness.

About fifty of our congregants were in Shabbat services in our sanctuary, entering and leaving through the side door as a precaution. Three neo-Nazis stood in front of the synagogue with semi-automatic weapons as congregants assembled for prayer, and gangs of skinheads marched past the building throughout the services. Despite this, many of our congregants left through the side door and went back out into the chaotic streets to participate in counter protests. Our Torah scrolls, including a Holocaust Torah scroll, were removed for fear of an attack on the synagogue.

### Clergy Role

The interfaith Charlottesville Clergy Collective offered to surround our building during Saturday Shabbat services to help protect us, but we encouraged them to be in the many places they needed to be that morning. It was very important for clergy of all faiths to be involved in different capacities in the counter protest, including on the frontline. Some clergy led meditation and prayer, creating safe spaces around town. Clergy chaplains were at the hospital. Clergy stood

take an injured woman to the hospital, my husband Geoff and I took off our *kippot* and *tallitot* and ran past police blockades to our garage across from the attack site. As Geoff drove our car, I prayed with the traumatized victim and her friends in the back seat.

### Jewish Impact

This event has sparked a heightened sense of Jewish identity and visibility, for the first time for some. We are seeing an increased number of people in the synagogue, many of whom are new.

**“Solidarity is the answer to this hatred. Most of the people who came to our town to share their racist ideology are not from here and do not represent this community. If we stand against them together, they will fail. The war on hate is also a spiritual war. We need to stand by our principles of love and acceptance and justice.”**

**Rabbi Thomas A. Gutherz '93, Senior Rabbi, Congregation Beth Israel, Charlottesville, VA**



at the Park, linking arms, holding a line, facilitating direct witness and confrontation. Because of their location, they could get to the car attack and comfort people in the horrible aftermath.

### Being a Leader

For me, as a Jew and a rabbi, it was important to be seen and heard, to bear witness. I began the day with a peaceful march with fellow interfaith clergy from Jefferson School to McGuffey Park, heckled along the way. Then I stationed myself on the front steps of the First United Methodist Church, directly across from Emancipation Park, and played music to drown out the sound of hate with songs of peace. My Christian clergy friends rushed me inside each time there was a security lockdown, knowing that I could be a target. When a fellow clergy member called from the scene of the attack and needed a car to

Some religious school families tell us they feel a stronger drive to come to synagogue for Shabbat. Orthodox Jews are worshipping with us in solidarity. It was standing room only when Rabbi Rick Jacobs '82 visited us on Shabbat and a full house when Julie Silver came to help our community heal through music. We want to create more activities to engage Jews in this community and continue this process of healing.

### Support

The arrival of neo-Nazis in our town has stirred up deep emotions. We are cognizant of the traumatic consequences and that many helpers are traumatized themselves. After the march, we held processing sessions and open office hours – the community needed that. We are committed to ensuring the security of our congregants and their children, so that everyone can feel the safety and

**Rabbi Rachel Schmelkin (in white tallit, above) marching against hate.**

love of our community. Our synagogue is a place where they can learn the Jewish value to repair our broken world. This education is more important now than ever.

### Unity

People in this town have come together across differences, singing, praying, and standing up together, supporting us and other minority groups. This unity is the ultimate protest to those who brought hate to our town. We stand together in strength.

**Rabbi Rachel Schmelkin '16** (Indiana University, B.A. in Psychology and Jewish Studies; HUC-JIR, M.A. in Hebrew Literature and rabbinical ordination), was a Tisch Fellow.

# WEATHERING THE STORMS

Samantha Tananbaum

In the wake of recent natural disasters, our alumni have stepped up to help their communities (literally and figuratively) weather the storms.

Only days after Hurricane Harvey hit Houston, members of Congregation Beth Israel gathered for Shabbat services in their smaller sanctuary after the storm flooded the main sanctuary.

Rabbi David Lyon '90 told the congregation, "Our prayers and songs help us to acknowledge that in God's presence we can find what we need" during challenges.

Rabbi Chase Foster '17 was ordained earlier this year and had just joined Congregation Beth Israel as Assistant Rabbi two months earlier. Although he had experienced hurricanes before, this was different.

"It's been a really great learning moment for me as a new rabbi as to how a community responds in a time of trauma and crisis," Rabbi Foster said. "I got a crash course in community systems and how well they work. I've been extremely uplifted by the kindness and the selflessness of the people of Houston, and I was positively overwhelmed by the amount of support we received from friends and colleagues, old and new."



The clergy team at Congregation Emanu El in Houston focused on the things that they were uniquely positioned to provide. They had a clean, safe, functional building, and they prided themselves on being a welcoming community.

"We opened the building to anyone who wanted to come dry out for a couple of hours, wanted a hot cup of coffee, internet access, a place to change their clothes, fill out insurance claims and FEMA forms, or take some time to reflect," said Rabbi Oren Hayon '03.

Taking this hospitality one step further, Congregation Emanu El hosted the Hurricane Harvey Day Camp with URJ Greene Family Camp and the Evelyn Rubenstein JCC. Together, they were able to provide a place where kids could be safe, happy, and engaged while their parents dealt with the aftermath of the storm at home.

# OUT OF THE ASHES

When recent Northern California wildfires all but destroyed URJ Camp Newman in Santa Rosa, the camp community came together in a show of unity which truly demonstrated the power of camp.

Thousands of people from around the world joined in via Facebook Live to participate in Camp Newman's end of day tradition called *siyum*, when they link arms and thank God for the shelter of peace that surrounds us and keeps us safe. Rabbi Erin Mason '10, MAJE '08, Camp Director, spoke to the community saying, "We have lost our permanent home, but our community and the love that we have for each other, the memories we cherish, are stronger."

A few days later, a press photographer snapped a photo that showed that the Jewish star on the hill overlooking camp had survived the fire. It was a fitting symbol of the strength and resilience of the Jewish community, and hope for the future.

In St. Thomas, Rabbi Michael Feshbach '89, who only began serving the Hebrew Congregation of St. Thomas in late July, was determined to hold Shabbat services after the storm passed. With eight people able to make it to the temple, and two joining via FaceTime, Feshbach decided he had a *minyan*, and provided a sense of perspective to his community.

Rabbi Norman Patz '65 traveled to Puerto Rico from New Jersey to lead Rosh Hashanah services at Temple Beth Shalom. The first day was canceled ahead of Hurricane Maria. On the second day, 15 people arrived at the synagogue and were happy to find the sanctuary unharmed. Unfortunately, the air conditioning was out, so they carried folding chairs across the street and held a service underneath the cover of a drive-through window of a bank.

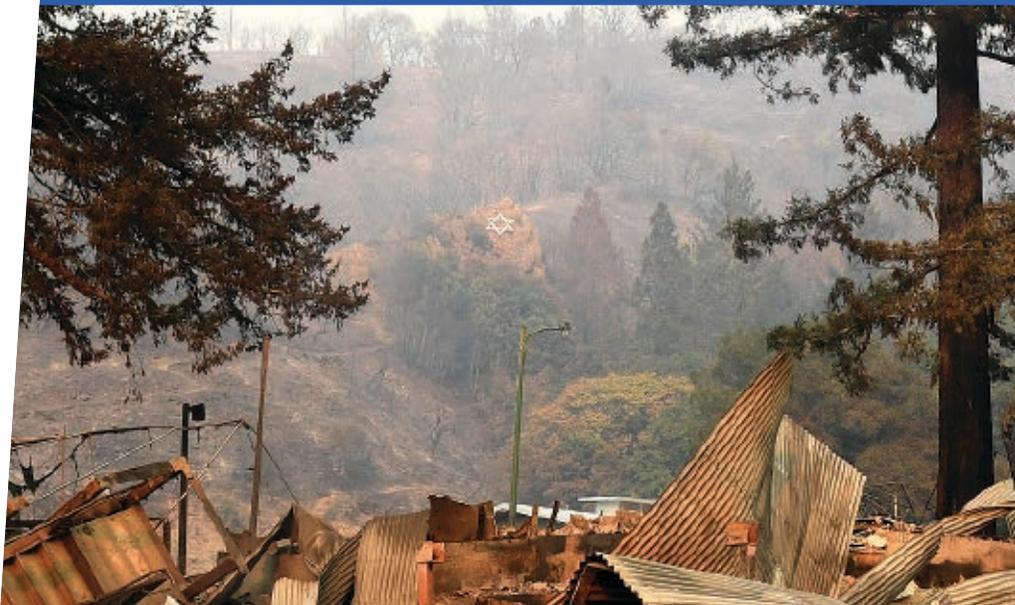
Rabbi Patz composed a special prayer for the congregation, even though they couldn't all be together for the holiday:

"What chaos will blow with the wind? What destruction will strike? Who will suffer? Who will stay secure? God of mystery and awe, grant us all safety as Hurricane Maria engulfs our homes and our lives. Protect us, shield us, guard us, grant to all of us who are in the path of this mighty storm peace of mind and physical safety, and peace of mind to all who are concerned about our well-being."

Looking forward, Rabbi Patz knows that the resilience of the Puerto Rican people will triumph.

"As we celebrate our new year, we do the best we can," he said. "The spirit of renewal is the thing that says get up and start living again. And that's what people here are trying to do."

Children playing in the Hurricane Harvey Day Camp hosted at Congregation Emanu El with URJ Greene Family Camp and the Evelyn Rubenstein JCC. (Photos: Jordan Scheiner)



# From Culinary Arts to Computers:

# JEWISH CAMPING

# NURTURES IDENTITY

“Research shows that Jewish camping is the most effective way to inculcate a love for Judaism in kids,” says Jordanna Flores, MAJNM ’01, MAJE ’01. “Camp is an acculturative, immersive experience, where kids can live Jewishly and joyously every day.”

Her assessment is confirmed by Paul J. Reichenbach, URJ Director of Camping and Israel Programs, who explains, “Jewish camping is where young people find Jewish role models and create lifelong Jewish friendships and identities.”

The Reform Movement’s commitment to this mission is exemplified by the exponential growth of URJ camping programs, including pioneering initiatives led by HUC-JIR education and nonprofit management alumni. Armed with the skills and knowledge they gained at HUC-JIR, they are developing new specialty camps to be launched this summer that are designed to appeal to kids’ specific interests.

Flores is the director of the new URJ 6 Points Sci-Tech Academy West in Southern California, designed to cultivate the Jewish minds and spirits of 5<sup>th</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup> graders through Judaism, science, and technology. “We want to start with something that a camper already loves, and connect through that to Judaism,” she says. “Invention and innovation are part of our Jewish tradition as much as our rituals and practice. We wrestle with questions, don’t take things at face value, and solve problems with ingenuity, making the tradition contemporary and more relevant. Seeing an unfulfilled need in the world and coming up with an invention to fill that need is the intersection of Judaism and sci-tech. That is repairing the world and that’s our *tikkun olam*.”



**Theater at URJ 6 Points Creative Arts Academy.**

Jo-Ellen Unger, EMA ’16, is the director of the new URJ 6 Points Creative Arts Academy in the mid-Atlantic region. This camp is for rising 4<sup>th</sup> through 11<sup>th</sup> graders who have a passion for six key areas: culinary arts, dance, instrumental and vocal music, theater, and the visual arts.

“Starting from the ‘why’ rather than the ‘how’ and ‘what’ is one of the things I learned at HUC-JIR,” explains Unger. “We started our planning for this new camp by identifying the core values and outcomes we hope to achieve. The goal is to lay the foundation while being aspirational.”

## Young scientists at URJ 6 Points Sci-Tech Academy.



Both Unger and Flores have spent the past several months ramping up to launch with budgeting, staffing with specialized expertise, board leadership development, marketing, and recruitment. Seeking an open tent, they want to make the camps accessible and affordable to congregational families as well as engage those who are unaffiliated. Each camp will offer short-term experiences, which research shows are impactful. Campers can also go to general camp for a session, and then do a specialty camp session too.

Finding kids who will thrive in specialty camps more often extends beyond kids already going to camp. “We are going to robotic competitions and local maker spaces where those kids hang out,” says Flores. She is also working closely with the leaders of the first URJ 6 Points Sci-Tech Camp in Massachusetts, a huge success with over 600 kids this past summer.

Unger wants to provide her campers with pathways to reach their own understanding of themselves as Jews. “Today we are connected by technology but have lost the intimacy of connecting as human beings. Camp gives you the opportunity to appreciate the natural world and to be authentically who you are. There is nothing like experiencing community during Shabbat at camp.”

Inclusion support is also a part of Unger’s foundational planning. Working with the URJ, NFTY, Mitzvah Corps, and Keshet, she wants “to ensure that all prospective campers have access and opportunities that are meaningful and are set up for success.”

Flores credits HUC-JIR for “training me to be an educational leader who can run a camp, a Jewish educational institution. I can look critically at curriculum, know what makes for great teaching, and supervise how the content is coordinated and delivered by my teachers and counselors.”

Unger acknowledges that she wouldn’t have this position without her degree from HUC-JIR. “The coursework was demanding and meaningful. It gave me a vocabulary that, internally, validated intuitive knowledge and, externally, gave legitimacy to my work as a Jewish educator.”

Unger and Flores feel blessed to be doing this work. “The future of the Jewish people rests on the opportunities we can provide through immersive programs.”

**Jordanna Flores, MAJNM ’01, MAJE ’01** (Lewis and Clark College, B.A. in English; HUC-JIR, M.A. in Jewish Nonprofit Management and M.A. in Jewish Education) Zimmer Children’s Museum Interim Director; Brandeis-Bardin Institute Program Director; Camp Alonim Director; LA Melton School Director; Assistant Director, HUC-JIR Rhea Hirsch School of Education/DeLeT  
[6pointsscitech.org](http://6pointsscitech.org)

**Jo-Ellen Unger, EMA ’16** (Florida State University, B.A. in Theater; HUC-JIR, Executive M.A. Program in Jewish Education) National Shakespeare Conservatory; Camp Coleman Assistant Director; NFTY Regional Director for Southeast Council; Assistant Director of Education, Temple Beth-El, Boca Raton, FL; Director of Education, Temple Beth El, Ahavath Chesed in Jacksonville, FL and Har Sinai Congregation in Owing Mills, MD; was the recipient of the Jim Joseph Scholarship.  
[6pointscreativearts.org](http://6pointscreativearts.org)

# From the **PULPIT** to the **POLICE FORCE**, from the **CANTORATE** to the **CIA**

Cantor Michael Shochet '94,  
Temple Rodef Shalom  
of Falls Church, VA

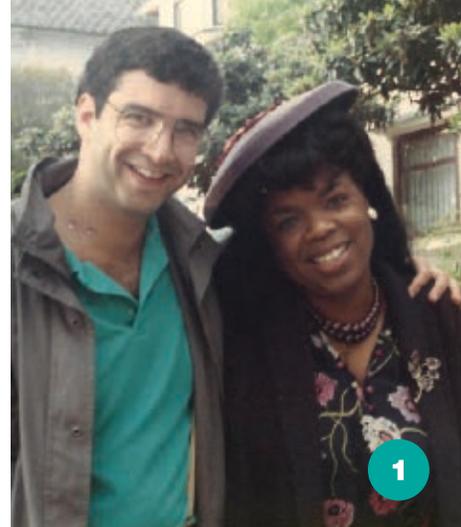
## /// HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED IN LAW ENFORCEMENT?

After college, I started out as a general assignment news reporter for WMAR-TV, an NBC affiliate in Baltimore. I forged a relationship with the police through my reporting, and decided to become a police officer with the intention of going into public information for the department after first going through the academy and training. Assigned to the East Baltimore district, after about one year on the street I was involved in a shooting where my partner was hit. Fortunately he survived, but the other officers on the scene and I were all secondarily traumatized. Back in the 1980s there wasn't any support for PTSD and a lot of officers wouldn't have wanted that help either, as they put up a tough façade. Faced with returning to patrol because there were no openings in public information, I made the hard decision to leave the force.

## /// HOW DID YOU DECIDE TO BECOME A CANTOR?

Parallel to my TV and police life, I was always very involved as a lay leader with Temple Emanuel of Baltimore, where I started a lay choir. Cantorial soloist Alvin Donald taught me to love Jewish music and Rabbi Gustav Buchdahl '63, D.Min. '96, taught me about integrity, Jewish values, and the importance of education. He sent me to a workshop for synagogue musicians at HUC-JIR in New York, my first exposure to ordained cantors. He next advised me to study with Cantor Samuel Dov Berman '74, z"l at Baltimore Hebrew Congregation, where I became a soloist. After a year, I applied to the Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music at HUC-JIR. As part of my cantorial studies, I completed pastoral training with Rabbi Nancy Wiener '90, D.Min. '94 because I saw spiritual and emotional health as a very important part of my cantorship. My thesis was a documentary video about the cantorship, bringing together my background in television with cantorial school. You can watch the video at [huc.edu/Chronicle17/Shochet](http://huc.edu/Chronicle17/Shochet).

- 1 Working with Oprah Winfrey as a college intern at WJZTV in Baltimore.
- 2 Cantor Shochet, head of the Fairfax County, VA Police Department Chaplaincy Program.
- 3 Cantor Shochet in *The Washington Post*.
- 4 Cantor Shochet (second from left) at the CIA.
- 5 Celebrating Hanukkah at the CIA with Leon Panetta (left), then CIA Director.



### /// HOW DID YOU COMBINE YOUR CANTORATE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT?

After my ordination in 1994, I became the first cantor of Temple Sinai in New Orleans and, in 1996, became a chaplain with the New Orleans police for two years. Twenty years ago, when I came to Temple Rodef Shalom of Falls Church, VA, to be its first cantor, Rabbi Amy Schwartzman '90 strongly supported my commitment to law enforcement chaplaincy, which I do on a volunteer basis. I contacted the world-renowned Fairfax County Police Department for their chaplain program. Over the years I've helped officers and the public with line of duty deaths, the DC sniper, manning the chaplain tent at the Pentagon on 9/11, and other major events that were traumatic for officers and the community. In 2003 I became head of the chaplaincy unit, a position I still hold today.

3



I joined the International Conference of Police Chaplains, which credentials chaplains worldwide, and became certified as a basic, then senior, and now master level chaplain.

### /// WHY IS YOUR CHAPLAINCY IMPORTANT?

My job is to support the police in their tough work, raise their morale, and offer compassion. When they have traumatic experiences, I have been in those shoes and can offer a spiritual presence to help them through challenging incidents. Police psychological care is different. Police officers are ordinary people we ask to do extraordinary things. We want them to know that we care for them.

### /// PLEASE DESCRIBE A RECENT EXPERIENCE.

A tragedy that made the national news involved a police officer on her first day on the job who answered a domestic call with her partners. They rang the bell, the suspect opened fire immediately, and she was

4



killed. She and her partners were flown to the Fairfax trauma center, and we got the alert. I got all of our chaplains to respond, and stayed at the hospital to support the officers and family members through the night. I was able to offer compassion and comfort, stood together with their chief, prayed with them, and went person to person to talk or just simply be present for them. That's where you feel you can make a difference.

### /// WHAT DO YOU TEACH AT THE POLICE ACADEMY?

As a subject-matter expert on the faculty, I teach about 100 recruits each year a class I created called "Spiritual and Emotional Survival." These are human beings whose souls need tending after seeing the worst of society in their career. I teach them how to care for their spirits, how to conduct death notifications with compassion, and how to help people through the worst experiences in their lives. They start out with a spirit that is full of meaning as they prepare to fight crime and make the world better; they are very idealistic. But, if they only see bad things, their spirits can be torn and lead to spiritual burn out, which can cause depression, alcoholism, and suicide, which is at an all-time high among police today.

### /// WHAT ABOUT THE LOSS OF TRUST IN POLICE TODAY?

I strongly advocate for law enforcement agencies to mandate visits to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, where officers can learn about the abuse of power. It's important to understand the meaning of wearing the badge and not taking advantage of the system. Morale is not great in law enforcement currently, so it is even more important that we, as the community, support them.

### /// WHAT IS YOUR INVOLVEMENT WITH THE FBI AND CIA?

I became an FBI chaplain for five years in the DC field office. At the same time, the CIA became interested in starting a chaplain program. Through my work in the community, they brought me on to begin their chaplain program as the first chaplain at the Agency. Today, there are twelve chaplains, of whom I am the only Jewish chaplain. I am there to provide spiritual first aid for employees when called upon. I also perform ceremonial functions such as leading prayers for their memorial service each year, or a holiday celebration such as for Hanukkah. It is a privilege to be a cantor offering support to people protecting our country.

5



### /// HOW DOES YOUR CHAPLAINCY WORK INFORM YOUR CANTORATE?

I am a pastoral caregiver to my congregation. My chaplaincy training gives me the skills to address the needs of congregants seeking clergy support during crises. Three years ago, we got the call that a new family in our congregation was in deep trauma because their 20-year-old daughter had been killed at college.

Rabbi Jeffrey Saxe '03, '05 and I went to their house to help the parents through the tragic loss of their only child. The trauma for them never goes away. My training has taught me the ministry of presence and compassionate support to help the law enforcement community and our congregants.

### /// HOW DOES YOUR MUSIC MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Pastoral care goes side by side with my role as a teacher of Jewish music and culture. My dynamic congregation – the second largest in the DC area – embraces the full range of Jewish music, from contemporary to classical, with lots of choirs, bands, and renowned guest performers. Music expresses consolation, comfort, and hope for the future. Last Thanksgiving, af-

ter the elections, Cantor Rachel Rhodes '14 and I organized an interfaith choral event on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, "Sing for Hope." Our congregation partnered with 45 diverse faith and secular organizations from Northern Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. The interfaith choir of 400 singers performed for over 1,000 people. This concert was a reminder that we are united by our diversity as one nation, and made stronger by each other. Music was a

great way to express that. Pastoral care and the cantorate make a difference in people's lives, building bridges of understanding and hope. That's my calling.

**Cantor Michael Shochet '94** (Ithaca College, B.A. in Television; HUC-JIR, Master of Sacred Music and cantorial ordination) was honored this year by his cantorial peers in the American Conference of Cantors – Guild of Temple Musicians with the first *Baal Hazon* Award for Visionary Leadership.



Bailey London (back row, left) with students at USC Hillel.

## CONNECTING WITH COLLEGE STUDENTS ON CAMPUS

**Bailey London, MSW/MAJCS '07,**  
Allen and Ruth Ziegler Executive Director, USC Hillel

**WHY HILLEL?:** Hillel is one of the only opportunities to engage with young adults as they take their first taste of independence and set their own priorities as part of a Jewish life. We are the training ground for future lay and professional leaders of synagogues, Federations, and every aspect of Jewish life. It all begins at Hillel.

**HEALTH AND WELLNESS:** USC Hillel is considered one of the thought leaders in health and wellness. Hillel International is piloting this new initiative through our program model of mental health support, disability inclusion, and overall physical and emotional wellness embedded into all programming. Hillel has no barriers to entry; everyone is welcome. It is a place for candid conversations. There is no stigma for students coming for support when they are most vulnerable. My degree in social work plays an important role in this work.

**PEER-TO-PEER ENGAGEMENT:** We have ten student interns who concentrate on peer-to-peer engagement. We give them high-level coaching, empower them to create their own programs, and partner with 100 nonprofit organizations for resources. This is the way we engage over 1,500 students. "Capitol Hill(e)" attracted students to watch the presidential debates and invited political

science professors to analyze how the debates affected the Jewish community. "Jewish Tastemakers" brought Jewish entrepreneurs in the food and fashion industry to present how Jewish values were integrated into their business models to an audience of students who came to learn about entrepreneurship. As future leaders of America, the students' interests merge the practical and the existential. We introduce them to Board members who take them under their wing and help them explore the professions they aspire to join.

**BDS ON CAMPUS:** BDS is not prevalent on our campus, which gives us the space to do proactive, engaging work around Israel with different perspectives. There are four different Israel advocacy organizations hubbed at Hillel. All opinions are respected, from right to left. We celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut and have Israelpalooza. Throughout the year, we bring in guest speakers with a focus on dialogue, not debate. We are very proud that we have grown from 1 ½ buses to 5 buses for Birthright Israel, with 170 students going to Israel in one academic year.

**ATTRACTING STUDENTS:** We want to be relevant to all students, not just the ones who know they want to come here. We have two new professionals on our staff whose job is to

be out where students are, and to help us be more relevant to them. We are interviewing students who don't engage with us to find out why they care about being Jewish and help us change to be more attractive. Market research and design thinking (human-centered planning) will enable us to cater to the most diverse cross-section possible.

**ALMA MATER NEIGHBOR:** USC Hillel is across the street from HUC-JIR's Skirball Campus in Los Angeles, where my degree in Jewish Nonprofit Management gave me the essential knowledge and skills in leadership development and fund raising to succeed at Hillel. I learned the value of community at HUC-JIR, where our Class of 2007 – now leaders of Federations, JCCs, AIPAC, JDC, JAFI, and Reform synagogues throughout North America and Brazil – became each others' best friends. I enjoy mentoring the HUC-JIR rabbinical interns at USC Hillel, who model for our undergraduates the possibilities of going on to study at HUC-JIR. It feels good to pay it forward in this job.

**Bailey London '07** (University of Arizona, B.A. in Judaic Studies; USC, Master of Social Work; HUC-JIR, M.A. in Jewish Nonprofit Management) previously served as Director of Emerging Leadership and Next Gen Initiatives at the Jewish Federation of Palm Beach County.



# RESCUING A SYRIAN REFUGEE FAMILY AND HELPING CHANGE THE WORLD

Over 350 synagogues throughout the United States have joined the HIAS Welcome Campaign by advocating for refugees, raising awareness about the crisis, and welcoming refugees into their local communities. **Rabbi Stephen A. Wise '05** offers a first-hand account of humanitarian rescue by his Canadian synagogue and community.

**The Syrian refugees asked: “How could a Jewish synagogue from across the world care enough to rescue their family?”**

**Rabbi Stephen A. Wise '05**  
**Shaarei-Beth El Congregation of Halton, Oakville, Ontario**

Working in the interfaith community became an increasingly large part of my work when I, a Toronto native, returned to Canada ten years ago to join Shaarei-Beth El Congregation of Halton in Oakville, Ontario. I was invited to join Oakville's Interfaith Council, where I was the only Jewish representative from the only synagogue in my geographic region.

My synagogue had held a low profile for its first 50 years. Located in a homogeneous white Christian town, the synagogue's building was unbranded, with hidden signage, within a residential area. It had little press and outreach. I thought we could do a better job.

I met with the editors of the local paper, the mayor, the chief of police, the Oakville Foundation, and members of Parliament. I quickly created great relationships with Sikh, Hindu, Muslim, and Christian professionals and communities. I was invited to serve on the multi-faith support team through police services. When there was an anti-Semitic incident, the mayor called upon me to handle it. When there was a tweet war between parliamentarians, the mayor wanted to know how our Jewish community was going to react to a Holocaust reference. Through all of these contacts, I developed interfaith partners for a broad range of initiatives, including a public Hanukkah candle-lighting, a community-wide Holocaust commemoration, and Muslim-Christian-Jewish programming in response to the anti-Semitic terrorism in Paris a few years ago.

In early 2015, Aliyah Kahn, a Muslim representative from the local Mosque, along with Reverend Morar Murray-Hayes from the local United Church, called to ask me for help. There was a Syrian family of refugees, related to members of the Mosque, who sought refuge in Canada. The Al-balki family consisted of five children, ranging in age from 12 to 19, and two parents. Could we, as three faith communities working together, sponsor them in a powerful expression of interfaith alliance?

When I approached my community, many questions were raised. Our Board discussed what it meant to be a faith congregation and how we lived our Jewish values. If our tradition teaches us to welcome the stranger, how were we doing that? We remembered the Canadian immigration policy of “none is too many” during the years leading up to World War II and the Holocaust. We concluded, how could we turn our back on refugees because they are Muslim, when our people were turned away because they were Jews?

Long before the plight of Syrian refugees flooded the media, our three faith communities took action. We raised \$40,000 and signed the legal



paperwork that we would be responsible for this family for a full year after they arrived. We filed our application in the Spring of 2015; by October 2015, Justin Trudeau became Prime Minister and pledged to bring in 50,000 refugees.

First told that our refugees would arrive in 2-3 years, the Al-balki family actually arrived on December 3, 2015. We were ready, having already raised funds and held food, clothing, and furniture drives. I met the family at the airport hotel. We did not have a shared language, but there was a translator who explained who I was and why we were helping them. There were hugs, tears, and a sense of amazement from the family.

Once they had settled in, we invited the family to a Shabbat service at our synagogue. It was a memorable occasion. The children knew some English and the youngest ones came up to the *bema* to thank us, asking how a Jewish synagogue from across the world could

Rabbi Stephen A. Wise (fifth from left) welcoming a Syrian refugee family to Canada.

Below: The Al-balki family at home in Canada.



**When you are in a small synagogue, you don't know what kind of impact you can make.**

care enough to rescue their family and then invite them to join in prayer in Canada? Their mother baked a Syrian dessert to thank us, and it was the hit of the *kiddush*.

It is now two years later, and the family is very settled. The father and son have jobs, and the younger children are acclimated to school and have friends. We got them a car, computers, dental care, and health-care. They are pretty much on their own two feet. They continue to have a relationship with our congregation, but the best news is that they don't actually need us, because they are now Canadian citizens!

This rescue mission reinforced our shared values and deep connection across faiths. It inspired us to rally together when there was a shooting at a mosque in Quebec, to create an interfaith summer camp for

kids, and to bring more refugee families over, in partnership. We have two more families in the pipeline of refugee rescue. Our HUC-JIR alumni in Vancouver, Montreal, and Toronto have all sponsored refugee families and we have shared strategies and experiences.

With the congregation's growing public profile, our membership has doubled during these ten years. As a small congregation with 150 families and a solo rabbi, the only employee, you don't know what kind of impact you can make. As a proud Canadian, I've always wanted to be a leader in this nation, which celebrates diversity and inclusiveness with an open door to immigrants. We have not only influenced the local community of Oakville, but have had an impact across Canada and even the world.

**Rabbi Stephen A. Wise '05** (University of Toronto, B.A. in History and Anthropology; Brandeis University, M.A. in Jewish Communal Service; HUC-JIR, M.A. in Hebrew Literature and rabbinical ordination) was the recipient of the Manuel D. and Rhoda Mayerson Scholarship, Benjamin Zucker Memorial Scholarship, and Rabbi Bernard M. Cohen Award of Ecumenical Studies at HUC-JIR.

# IT TAKES TWO



When Rabbi Rachael Klein Miller '17 of Kansas City, KS, and Rabbi Max Miller '17 of Atlanta, GA, met and fell in love during their first year of rabbinical studies in Israel, little did they know that their professional lives would be entwined too. Ordained in 2017, they are now working as assistant rabbis at the synagogue where Max grew up, Temple Emanu-El of Atlanta. They each hold assignments designated by the senior rabbi, Rabbi Nicholas (Spike) Anderson '08. The Millers will be focusing on Israel and youth engagement for their congregation of 600 families.

"HUC-JIR prepared both of us to work with youth through my internship teaching kids at Wise Temple in Cincinnati and Max's work at Hillel at Miami University in Ohio," says Rachael. "Both of us have been deeply involved in pro-Israel advocacy as AIPAC Leffell Fellows and have Master's Concentrations in Israel Education from the iCenter," adds Max.

"We also wrote a grant to the Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati and initiated 'The Table,' which allowed us to facilitate Shabbat dinners for young professionals, where hosts would provide the raw ingredients and cook with us in their home. Their friends would come to eat and have a good conversation relating to current issues through a Jewish lens. Young people were going to Cincinnati Jewish social activities, but they wanted more content, so we added a mid-week table talk for those who wanted to learn more."

They are excited about the opportunities to connect people to Judaism. "In all the chaos of technology and politics in day-to-day life, Judaism can be a grounding place for people to turn to," says Rachael. Max agrees, "Judaism provides a response for the many questions we have in life, and is a platform for people seeking authentic, deep, and challenging meaning."

The Millers are following in the footsteps of Rabbi Laurie Rice '01 and Rabbi Philip (Flip) Rice '01, who have shared the pulpit in Nashville's Congregation Micah since 2006. At the beginning, each was given a specific portfolio, but a decade later, they take turns as true partners. Their teamwork enables them to balance their work and their family life, optimizing their energy level to be fresh at all times.

They are both pioneers. Laurie built a pre-school that brings families into the community, now numbering over 500 families as Nashville has grown to almost 10,000 Jews through a diversity of industries coming to Tennessee for tax advantages. Flip launched the annual community high school trip to Israel, and to date 250 Jewish teens in Nashville have gone to Israel. "In this region, church matters. The Jews of Nashville affiliate and are happy to have Torah and a synagogue

with a warm and welcoming approach to interfaith families and LGBT inclusion,” says Laurie.

What are the benefits of their teamwork?

“Collegiality, trust, every weakness is filled by the other’s strength,” says Laurie. Flip shares a joke about coming home, asking “how was your day” and not having it be the same as each other’s day. They want to inspire other rabbinical couples to explore this option – “it’s been a blessing for us.”

**Rabbi Rachael Klein Miller '17** (American Jewish University, B.A. in Jewish Studies; HUC-JIR, M.A. in Hebrew Letters and rabbinical ordination) was a Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati Fellow, AIPAC Leffell Fellow, iCenter for Israel Education Fellow, Dean’s Intern, I.M. Wise Temple Intern, and Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives Intern.

**Rabbi Max Miller '17** (University of Maryland, College Park, B.A. in Arts and Humanities; HUC-JIR, M.A. in Hebrew Letters and rabbinical ordination), was a Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati Fellow, AIPAC Leffell Fellow, iCenter for Israel Education Fellow, Dean’s Intern, and I.M. Wise Temple Intern.

**Rabbi Laurie Rice '01** (Northwestern University, B.A. in History and Slavic Languages and Literatures; HUC-JIR, M.A. in Hebrew Letters and rabbinical ordination).

**Rabbi Philip (Flip) Rice '01** (University of Virginia, B.A. in History; Florida State University, M.A. in Western Religious Thought and Spirituality; HUC-JIR, M.A. in Hebrew Letters and rabbinical ordination).

Left: Rabbis Rachael Klein Miller and Max Miller.

Right: The Rice family in the shuk in Israel.



## WHAT IS TZEDEK AMERICA?

Tzedek America transforms lives, strengthens Jewish identity and changes the world through immersive social justice experiential education. Our flagship program is a nine-month residential Jewish gap year experience based in Los Angeles, designed to strengthen students' Jewish identity as they find meaning in their lives before they enter college. Using an experiential method that includes travel, social justice internships, adventure programming, and shared responsibilities, participants see firsthand the challenges facing America today and gain experience of what it will take to help solve them.

# TZEDEK AMERICA: FOSTERING JEWISH IDENTITY AND SOCIAL CHANGE

Avram Mandell,  
MARE '01

## WHAT INSPIRED THIS PIONEERING PROJECT?

After Hurricane Katrina hit in 2005, I took a group of 11th and 12th graders to do relief work in Mississippi. It

became clear to me that social justice work

was the way to engage Jewish teenagers during their

prime years of identity formation. At that time, there

were no Jewish gap year programs in the U.S. I became a Fellow in the

Los Angeles Federation Presentense

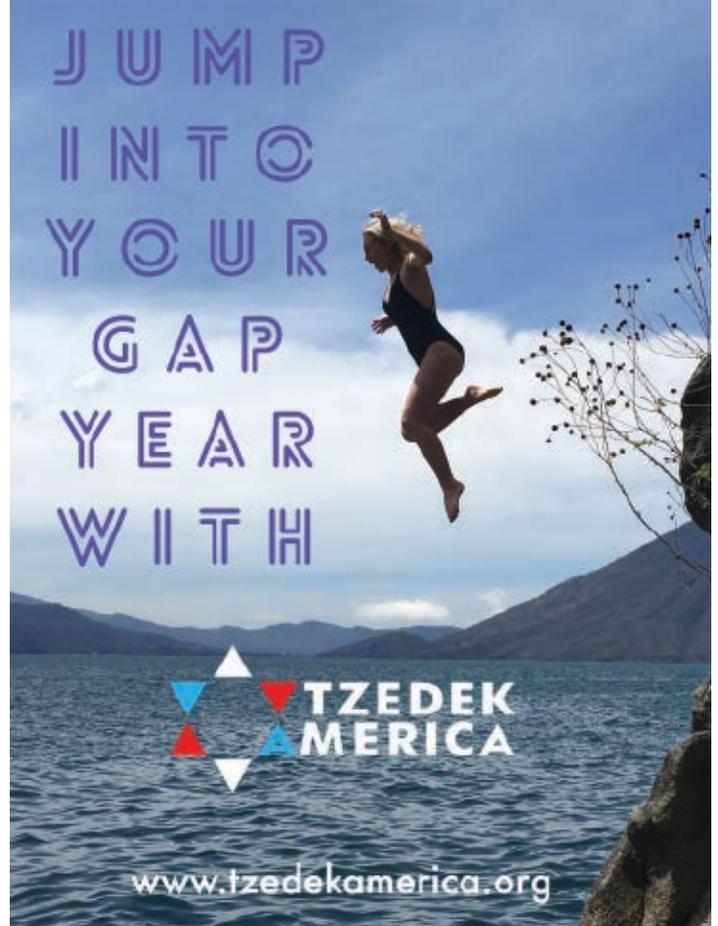
incubator program, through which I created a business plan, 25-page proposal, and 5-year

budget. Rabbi Ken Chasen '98 and Leo Baeck

Temple provided my first large donation, and I jumped off the high dive.

## WHEN AND HOW DID YOU LAUNCH?

2016-17 was our first full year. Our Tzedek Americans were Reform, secular, Orthodox, and Conservative Jews, 18-20 years old, from throughout the U.S. They fulfilled four-day-a-week internships in nonprofits in Los Angeles that empower underserved youth, bring solar energy to communities, advocate for women and children, transform public education, serve the homeless, provide inner city access to the arts, and fight for fair wages. Every Tuesday night, they engaged in interactive Judaic learning with leading scholars from HUC-JIR, USC, UCLA, and AJU. On Fridays, we did site



**“I CONSIDER MYSELF A JEWISH EDUCATOR  
WHO USES SOCIAL JUSTICE AS THE  
HOOK TO INSPIRE KIDS ON THEIR  
JEWISH JOURNEY.”**

–  
**AVRAM MANDELL**

visits to nonprofits and social enterprises.

**HOW DOES ‘IMPACT TRAVEL’  
ENRICH YOUR PROGRAM?**

We traveled to Baton Rouge for flood relief work. We visited a detention center to meet with immigration lawyers and recent refugees in Phoenix, hosted by families from Beth Shalom Synagogue and Temple Chai. During our 10-day trip to Guatemala, we not only celebrated Purim with the Reform community and Shabbat in an Orthodox shul, but we visited a women’s weaving collective and children’s orphanage, studied Jewish texts on fair trade while sipping lattes at a coffee processing plant, and relished other experiences. Our travel is not ‘voluntourism.’ Our goal is to learn about the history, the poverty, and what the government and nonprofits are doing. These are fact-finding missions that change our world view and our lives.

**HOW DO YOU CREATE A SENSE OF  
COMMUNITY AMONG THE COHORT?**

The students live communally with a resident advisor in the Tzedek America house a mile from HUC-JIR and USC. They take turns cooking a hot meal for the cohort each night, coached by a professional chef, and welcome weekly guests – CEOs of nonprofits, community lay leaders, scholars, media experts – to discuss a broad range of issues. We enjoy hospitality on Shabbat in the homes of families from the full denominational and ethnic spectrum of the Los Angeles Jewish community as well as with Hillel at USC.

**WHAT IS YOUR GOAL FOR YOUR  
TZEDEK AMERICANS?**

My goal is that they define their Jewish identity, develop practical life skills, and continue to advance social justice work. We imbue them with the leadership skills that will

Middle:  
Volunteering at an orphanage  
in Guatemala.

Bottom:  
Tutoring African refugees  
in Phoenix, AZ.

enable them to be strong planners, communicators, and team leaders. We show them what can be next, so that when they go to college they will further cultivate their capacity as Jewish leaders and agents of social change. I also contacted each Hillel director at their respective colleges to let them know that they had a Tzedek America graduate on their campus, willing, ready, and capable of being a leader at their university.

**DO YOU OFFER ANY OTHER PROGRAMS?**

We offer national and international service trips and impact travel trips for youth groups, adult groups, and college Hillels to explore social justice issues through a Jewish context. We take groups to Guatemala to meet the Jewish communities and explore the social challenges in the country; Phoenix to explore the immigration and refugee situation; reservations in Colorado, Utah, and Nevada to understand challenges facing Native Americans; and Los Angeles to investigate the journey from homelessness to middle class. We will be bringing a group of teenagers to Houston to do Hurricane Harvey relief work this February. We are also exploring the creation of a social justice specialty camp for high school students.

**HOW DID HUC-JIR PREPARE YOU  
FOR YOUR WORK?**

The Rhea Hirsch School of Education prepared me to educate these young adults and help them find their own paths. My studies instilled in me a focus on process, reflection, curiosity, and goal-setting before moving forward with programming ideas. My professors Dr. Isa Aron, Dr. Michael Zeldin ’77, and Rabbi William Cutter ’65, Ph.D., are among my closest advisors to this day. I am grateful to have an extraordinary network of HUC-JIR faculty and colleagues throughout the Reform Movement who advise me and help recruit.

**Avram Mandell ’01** (Miami University, M.A. in Marketing; HUC-JIR, M.A. in Religious Education) served as Assistant Director of URJ Camp Harlam; Education Director at Temple Beth El in San Antonio, TX; and Director of Education at Leo Baeck Temple in Los Angeles, CA.

**“THROUGH  
TZEDEK AMERICA,  
I HAVE REAL WORLD  
EXPERIENCES THAT WILL  
BE VALUABLE IN COLLEGE AND  
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OBSERVABLE IMPACT IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY.”**

–  
**GABE MELMED, TZEDEK AMERICA FELLOW 2017**

# STUDENTS IN ACTION



## The Diplomat and Doctoral Student **BUILDING PEACE AT THE UN**

Eva Nthoki, Technical Advisor and Peacebuilding Expert, United Nations; Ph.D. Student '19

Eva Nthoki shepherds us through the art-filled corridors of the United Nations to the Delegates Lounge, where she is greeted respectfully by colleagues, ranging from Ambassadors to Senior Officers from all over the world. Born, bred, and educated in Nairobi, Kenya, Eva works on behalf of her nation as a member of the Permanent Mission of Kenya to the United Nations. Her portfolio also includes work pertaining to the UN Peacebuilding Commission; Security Council meetings dealing with the situation of the Middle East and the Palestinian Question; and UN Peacekeeping, International Security and Disarmament, among other duties. She also holds the distinction of being a Ph.D. student (ABD) at our Pines School of Graduate Studies, where she is completing her dissertation on a comparative analysis of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and peace processes. She spoke to *The Chronicle* about her work, which bridges the worlds of academia and international diplomacy.

### What brought you to HUC-JIR?

After completing my B.A. in World History, Linguistics, and Political Science at Nairobi University, I came to the United States for graduate studies. I found out about HUC-JIR via my semester-long studies in Israel at Jerusalem University College. Its director, HUC-JIR alumnus Dr. Paul Wright '94, advised me to study at HUC-JIR based on my career and academic interests. I enrolled as a Ph.D. student in the joint HUC-JIR – University of Cincinnati program, combining Judaic and Hebrew Studies with Arabic Studies, having previously completed an M.A. in Ancient Near Eastern Civilization at Miami University in Ohio, and an M.A. in Linguistics at Gordon Cornwell Theological Seminary in Massachusetts.

### What is it like to work at the UN?

A typical day for me begins with reading through the UN Journal, which is published daily as a guide to meetings. Some days can last from 8 am until 2 am, especially if there are ongoing negotiations on resolutions! Preparation usually begins with reading background documents before meetings, including relevant resolutions, and preparing talking points to be tabled at meetings. Before and after every meeting, I am responsible for writing briefs for the Ambassador and supervising Officers on all developments. Depending on what's on the table, it may also include holding bilateral meetings with specific individuals and countries on various subjects, or organizing meetings targeting specific Member States and officials from various UN agencies and organs.

### How do you contribute to the Kenyan Mission and the work of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC)?

In my initial application for an intern position, I indicated that I was seeking the opportunity to explore how my life and academic and work experience can contribute to the advancement of the voices of Kenyans studying and living abroad, specifically at the United Nations in the context of the ongoing global conflict and peace challenges. What first comes to mind is a joint project Kenya did with the Swiss delegation. The Swiss expert and I reviewed the history of the PBC (founded in 2005), interviewed over thirty Member States and Non-Member Observer States, all with diverse perspectives, and reviewed all of the resolutions and documents pertaining to the UN Peacebuilding Architecture. It led to a paper on the history of the PBC and its procedures, a summarized version of which was adopted and annexed in the PBC's Annual Report as a guiding document. It continues to serve as a resource when issues arise on the work of the PBC. Countries approach the PBC and ask to engage on a broad range of issues, including national peacebuilding plans, peacebuilding projects pertaining to women and youth empowerment, socio-economic dimensions of peacebuilding, financing for peacebuilding, institution building, elections, national reconciliation, cross border

challenges, and more. Member States can attend the meetings and discuss these issues, which transcend national boundaries and encourage us to focus regionally.

### Why are you examining the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for your Ph.D. research?

I want to understand why conflicts can be this prolonged, with multiple peace-processes failures. My driving question is, do we have the relevant people at what I prefer calling the dialoguing table and implementation arena? From the outside looking in, with due respect to the complexities of the situation, I see a lot of similarities of language, culture, vision, theological underpinnings, and present and future hopes among the parties concerned, young and old. I would like to understand and attempt to document what still keeps the conflict going and the peace process failing.

### How does your work at the UN and your Ph.D. research interact?

Pretty much in every way. There is a lot of interface both in the day-to-day work and interactions and relationships with the relevant Member States experts. My only agenda is to understand and document, not to solve the problem. The solution, I believe, will come from the parties concerned, the people who have actually lived through all this for generations. Most people are curious about my interest and approach. I have something to learn from everyone I meet.

### Why did you choose to study at HUC-JIR?

HUC-JIR is unique for having non-Jewish students in a Jewish institution. I found it a place where I could acclimate to the Jewish culture I was studying. I enjoyed taking most of my classes with rabbinical students, where I could learn how they looked at and interacted with the world.

### How does Jewish text study inform your work at the UN?

HUC-JIR fosters the first-hand critical analysis of the text, where every word counts. In the rabbinic tradition, one doesn't have to choose who is right. It is an ongoing dialogue. This approach applies profoundly to the UN, where linguistics, the choice of words, and even the arrangement of paragraphs when drafting documents and resolutions all hinge on a careful and thoughtful consideration of the text. For both the Jewish tradition and the work of the UN, the validity of the dialogues is proven true through integration and implementation of the content in daily life. My studies also allow me to see the Middle East in its historical, theological, and political contexts and how all these continue to interface in present-day discussions and diplomatic policies.

Eva Nthoki '19 received the S.H. and Helen R. Scheuer Foundation Fellowship.

On June 2, 2018, Cincinnati will witness the ordination of two U.S. military chaplains in uniform. **Aaron Rozovsky '18** and **Yonatan Greenberg '18** are dedicating their rabbinates, in part, to serving in the Rhode Island Army National Guard and U.S. Navy, respectively. They will be the first two military chaplains to graduate in the same class from the same campus in 32 years and join a growing number of alumni offering pastoral care in the U.S. military.

### The National Guard – Always Ready, Always There

“9/11 had a huge impact on me. I felt the calling to serve my country,” recalls rabbinical student Aaron Rozovsky. He served simultaneously in the Rhode Island Army National Guard while in college and today, after 11 ½ years, holds the rank of Captain as a chaplain candidate.



Aaron Rozovsky, Rabbinical Student '18

Rozovsky was a platoon leader in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba from 2009-10, in charge of three dozen 18-40+ year-old soldiers who served as a quick reaction force for the detention facility. “We were told that this was the most strategic detention facility in the world. While in GTMO, I was heavily influenced by my reading of *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. It describes how one of the chief architects of the Holocaust was accorded the legal rights by Israel that he had never granted the Jews. Wearing the uniform, I was simultaneously a Jew and a U.S. Army Officer and, as such, was representing both Jewish and American values. It was at Guantanamo that I decided that I wanted to become a rabbi.”

In Afghanistan from 2011-12 as a brigade staff officer, Rozovsky helped run the main detention facility that held Afghan insurgents – including members of Al Qaeda and the Taliban. The task force under which his brigade fell did everything from working daily with the International Committee of the Red Cross to coordinate family visits for the detainees to advising the Afghan Ministry of Justice on legal procedures. In his free time, he prepared for

rabbinical school. He displayed his Jewish identity openly, saying “if anything happens to me, I want to go out with the American flag on my sleeve and my *kippah* on my head. I saw the world at its best and its worst before rabbinical school, and I feel blessed to be at HUC-JIR.”

Rozovsky characterizes his small National Guard brigade, with whom he did both deployments, as his family, and is grateful

for the support of colleagues across all faiths. “The person who taught me Hebrew in Afghanistan was a Lutheran pastor from the Nebraska National Guard,” he notes. “A Southern Baptist chaplain with the Kentucky National Guard mentored me during my studies at HUC-JIR, giving me five to ten minutes at each service to provide the Jewish perspective in the form of a sermon. My chaplain supervisor in Rhode Island was my chaplain in Afghanistan and is the senior pastor of a local Hispanic Evangelical church. When you are with Evangelicals, Southern Baptists, and Catholics, they always quote from their scripture, and I quote from mine: Talmud Bavli, Shulchan Aruch, Zohar, etc. They are fascinated by it.”

From his student pulpits in Petoskey, MI, and Terre Haute, IN, and Clinical Pastoral Education training at HUC-JIR through the VA Medical Center in Louisville, KY, to the combat medical ministry course, chaplain basic officer leader course, and the chaplain captains career course, Rozovsky has prepared for the next stage of his career. He will be the second Jewish chaplain in the 379-year history of the Rhode Island Army National Guard, which was

founded in 1638. Serving one weekend each month and two weeks each summer, he will be ready for the call to duty wherever and whenever he is needed, while doing hospital chaplaincy full-time.

“Much of the world isn’t like America. In many places, where one’s religion, political affiliation, race, or world view can be a death sentence, diversity is not a rich cultural tapestry that illuminates people’s lives; rather it is the cause of hatred and genocide. I do what I do because I want future generations to enjoy the same hard-won liberties I have had all of my life.”

**Aaron Rozovsky '18** (Providence College, B.A. in History; Central Connecticut State University, M.S. in International Studies; HUC-JIR, M.A. in Hebrew Letters) is the Rabbinical Fellow for Kulanu Cincinnati Reform Jewish High School, the recipient of the Anshe Emeth Memorial Temple’s Bernard David Nathan Memorial Scholarship and the Farmington Valley Jewish Congregation-Emek Shalom Israel Scholarship, and a Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati Fellow.



## A CALLING WITHIN

### Yonatan Greenberg, Rabbinical Student '18

**FAMILY:** Greenberg's grandparents found refuge under false Greek Orthodox papers in Greece during the Shoah; his family continued to hide their Jewish identity after the war for fear of anti-Semitism.

**IDENTITY:** He discovered his Jewish identity at the age of 12, sparking a lifelong journey of Jewish learning.

**GREECE TO U.S. TO ISRAEL:** Serving as the only Jew in his unit in the Greek Army's special forces after high school confirmed his rabbinical calling. He immigrated to the U.S. for college studies, joined the Navy, and became a U.S. citizen. He made *aliyah* in 2003, received rabbinical ordination for his studies at Orthodox *yeshivot* in Israel, and served in the Israel Defense Forces.

**CAMBRIDGE:** He earned the Master's of Divinity in the University of Cambridge's Interfaith Program on Jewish-Christian Relations, with a thesis on the Greek Orthodox Church under the Nazi occupation.

**RABBINICAL SCHOOL:** Mentorship by Reform rabbis during his college years in New York introduced him to Reform Judaism and eventually led him to the rabbinical program at HUC-JIR in 2014. He taught at Cincinnati's Reform high school, served the Cedar Village Retirement Community, and held a bi-weekly pulpit in Hattiesburg, MS.

## A CALLING



**INTERNATIONAL WELCOME:** Greenberg encourages international students to come to HUC-JIR for its academic rigor, openness to question, and supportive community to learn how to better serve the Jewish people.

“Being a navy chaplain is what I want to do. In contrast to a civilian rabbinical role, I have the opportunity to be with my congregation 24/7 on base or ship. Servicemen and women need guides, God, and a listening ear. I hope to help people of all faiths who need spiritual guidance. I want to give back to this country where I have been educated and given a chance to build my life. It is a calling within a calling – serving God, the Jewish people, and my country.”

**Yonatan Greenberg '18** (State University of New York, B.A. in Jewish Studies; University of Cambridge, Master's of Divinity) is the student rabbi at Temple Beth Shalom in Fort Walton Beach, FL; the recipient of the Kenneth E. Ehrlich Scholarship given by the Beck Family; and a Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati Fellow.

# THE MILLENNIAL CHALLENGE

Matt Green, Rabbinical Student '18

STUDENTS  
IN ACTION

**GRINDR SHABBAT:** The summer before I matriculated at the New York campus, I had a profile on Grindr, the world's largest social networking app for gay, bisexual, and queer men, in which I described my recent return from the Year-In-Israel Program and my rabbinical studies. This led to many online conversations on Jewish themes: religious Jews who came out, growing up Jewish, and becoming a rabbi. Realizing that there were a lot of Jews on Grindr, and supported by a Be Wise Fellowship in Jewish Entrepreneurialism micro grant, I organized a Hanukkah Shabbat for 12 people who met on the app. It was fun and people wanted to host the next one themselves. Grindr Shabbat quickly grew into a Shabbat circuit in the Crown Heights, Brooklyn neighborhood, better known for being home to the Chabad world headquarters. These dinners grew into a prayer space with a monthly minyan and dinner for 60-70 people, now going on for about three years.

**BROOKLYN JEWS:** Two years ago, Congregation Beth Elohim (CBE) hired me to run "Brooklyn Jews," a 14-year-old program with a listserv of about 3,000 people, of whom we engage over 1,000 each year. I launched a new monthly experiential program, "Shabbat for Brooklyn Jews," in the Park Slope area. This program alternates monthly events: a Friday night traditional Shabbat service at a beer hall with 80 people; and a non-prayer-oriented Shabbat

brunch for 60 people in a Prospect Heights loft, catered by the chef formerly at Eataly and Gramercy Tavern, featuring an hour long facilitated conversation about what it means to be a cultural Jew today. Each event draws regulars as well as 20-30 newcomers. We also organize groups of young Jews to be part of the broader constellation of CBE programming, such as a recently packed Patty Smith concert in our sanctuary and frequent post-election organizing meetings.

**AFFILIATION:** We want to experiment and serve the larger community that is underserved. Since we recognize that formal synagogue membership isn't in the cards for everybody, we try to cultivate a casual vibe that welcomes everyone, regardless of their membership status. When people who come to "Brooklyn Jews" want to affiliate, CBE is their first choice.

**WELCOMING NON-JEWS:** Each year, I offer an *aliyah* for Millennial non-Jews at our High Holy Day services at Prospect Park and ask everyone else to rise to say the blessing for them. One out of three participants at these services is not Jewish, but wants to learn about their partner's traditions. In conversations, I am told that their Jewish partners don't think critically about Judaism until they start out-dating and then seek out CBE to be Jewishly involved. We offer conversations about conversion, Shabbat dinners, and a Basic Judaism class that engages them in reading books and taking on more rituals.

**THE 'NONES':** My senior thesis is surveying non-religious, non-ethnic Jews in order to better design Jewish experiences and rituals around them. 95% of the young people I talk to say they are secular or cultural Jews; the vast majority says they don't believe in God and prayer. Most came out of the mainstream Reform and Conservative Movements, but they are not ideological and don't identify denominationally.

**THE FUTURE:** Young Jews moving to the cities are seeking culture – food, theater, museums, art, film – and other young people. Self-driven discussions of meaning and big ideas are very popular with them. Furthermore, the current political context, the emergence of anti-Semitism, and the debate on white identity politics is sparking uncertainty and questions about what is Jewishness and how they can heal our society. Synagogues need to explore what these people want and stretch to be the centers of culture and ideas as well as venues for political action and community organizing that will craft a meaningful Jewish community for this pivotal generation.

**Matt Green '18** (University of Michigan, B.A. in History) has been the rabbinical intern at Congregation Beth Elohim in Brooklyn, NY, for the past three years and is a Tisch Fellow.



# Bringing Healing and Hope

Emily Simkin, Cantorial Student '20



**Pastoral Care:** As a senior in high school when my *bubbe* was very sick, I took her hand and sang the *Shema* to her as she passed. In that moment, I knew that pastoral work was something I cared deeply about. I knew that sharing music with others as a conduit for spirituality during the intimate moments of their lives would be a transformative privilege. HUC-JIR gave me the opportunity to pursue clinical pastoral education (CPE) as part of my professional development electives.

**CPE at MSK:** My summer internship at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSK) fulfilled 400 hours in 10 weeks. This included 8 hours of classes weekly, including lectures on bereavement, palliative care, breath work, forgiveness, and diverse faith beliefs. I also prepared verbatim reports (written records of what was said during my interactions with patients) for review by my supervisor and feedback from my peers. I shadowed full-time chaplains – a rabbi and an imam – on my first day. I was given helpful guidelines and then learned by doing and processing my experiences with my cohort.

**Why MSK:** I specifically chose MSK and its Breast-Gynecology floor in an effort to feel close to my late mentor from Camp Harlam, Rabbi Vicki Tuckman '03, *z"l*. She was treated at MSK and passed away just weeks before I left for my first year of studies in Israel. I continue to feel her presence as I carry on her legacy and continue her work in transmitting a love of Jewish life.

**Treating the Spirit:** MSK has a holistic approach where medical treatment includes a focus on the mind and spirit. I provided support to patients and their families mainly through empathic listening and emotional enabling. Listening was the key to helping them acknowledge their feelings. Naming and acknowledging emotions are essential to healing.

**Prayer:** I prayed with all of my patients from every faith background. My spontaneous prayer with patients would always begin with deep breathing exercises. In Hebrew, the words *neshama* (soul) and *neshema* (breath) share a root. I believe that engaging with the breath allows us to reconnect spiritually. I would then use guided imagery, visualizing the breath as a healing stream through the body, exhaling all pain and toxins. I liked to follow this with an extemporaneous personal prayer which reflected the plight as well as the hope of the patient.

**Being a Mirror:** Chaplains serve as mirrors. Patients share their emotions and chaplains reflect back to them what they expressed. This allows patients to feel that they are heard and understood while helping them process their spiritual distress and grief. My role was to listen, affirm, and validate.

**Emily Simkin '20** (Berklee College of Music, B.M. in Vocal Performance) is the student cantor at Congregation B'nai Jeshurun in Short Hills, NJ, and a Tisch-Star Fellow.



# Opening Doors for the Incarcerated

Hilly Haber, Rabbinical Student '19

Rabbi Yohanan once asked his students what they thought the parted walls of the Red Sea looked like as the Israelites crossed from slavery into freedom. Serah bat Asher, the daughter of Jacob's son Asher who had crossed to freedom with the Israelite multitude, called out from the back of the *Beit Midrash* that the walls of the sea were made of mirrors in which each person saw his or her reflection.

on the island, started and led by Religious Studies Professor Andrew Skotnicki, I was granted the privilege of working with two college classes made up of men who were either serving a sentence or detained and awaiting trial or sentencing on Rikers Island.

After walking through security and into the classroom, I would wait as the inmates were escorted by the Corrections Officers

the door of our classroom closed, infinite doors opened.

After finishing the Manhattan College course, the students on Rikers Island are ceremoniously handed an acceptance letter to Manhattan College by Professor Skotnicki, along with the promise of tuition and tutoring for whenever they are released from jail or prison. More

## If we were to look at the reflection staring back at us from the walls of the parted sea, who would be with us on this march to freedom? Who would be missing?

Every year at Passover, we return to Egypt, that narrow place, and every year we leave again. If we were to look at the reflection staring back at us from the walls of the parted sea, who would be with us on this march to freedom? Who would be missing? Who in our midst still suffers from oppression, hardship, and alienation?

Every Friday for one year, I served as the teaching assistant for a college course on Rikers Island, New York City's main jail complex. Every Friday, I walked backwards through the walls of the parted sea as a visitor in one of the narrowest places in the country. Through a Manhattan College program currently in its eleventh semester

from their housing units to the educational wing of the facility. One by one, the officers would frisk each man and then allow him to enter the classroom with readings, notebook, and pencils in hand. When the last man would enter the room, I would close the door and instantly the sea would part.

No longer inmates, these men were now students, diving headfirst into the works of such philosophers as Aristotle and Immanuel Kant. Together, we learned about and discussed the historical origins of the prison system, debated diverging philosophies of punishment, and armed ourselves with knowledge about the criminal justice system today. When

than just an acceptance letter to college, this letter represents an expansion of possibility. Professor Skotnicki argues that this expansion of the possible on a collective level is necessary to any reform of the criminal justice system.

Whether a student chooses to attend Manhattan College or not, one new path, one new vision for the future, one way out of Egypt has been opened to him.

**Hilly Haber '19** (Mount Holyoke, B.A. in German and Religion; Humboldt University, Berlin; Harvard Divinity School, Master of Theological Studies) is a Reform California intern and student rabbi at Congregation Beth Jacob in El Centro, CA; the recipient of the Women of Reform Judaism Scholarship; and a Tisch Fellow.

# Journey to the “End of the Earth”

**Erin Binder, Education '18 and Rabbinical Student '21**  
**Alexandra Kurland, Cantorial Student '20**



The memorial to the bombing of the AMIA in 1994.



Cantorial student Alexandra Kurland '20 (left) and rabbinical student Stephanie Crawley '18 (right) at the Ajim Deli in Buenos Aires.



Students at the *LeDor Vador* Senior Center.

As students at HUC-JIR, we often explore the notion of not just Jewish travel, but the Jewish journey. Visiting Jewish corners of the world is a powerful way to learn the history, meet the people, and give context to a narrative as it relates to the larger Jewish people. In June, we had the opportunity to travel to Buenos Aires, Argentina, sponsored by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) as part of a growing partnership with HUC-JIR. The JDC Entwine trip's itinerary and overall goals were tailored to the experience and inquiries of students from the rabbinical, cantorial, and education programs across all four campuses.

A series of traumatic events rocked the Argentine Jewish community in the past few decades: bombings of the Israeli Embassy in 1992 and *Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina* (AMIA) in 1994, as well as the 2001 financial crisis that shook Argentina as a whole. In spite of these catastrophes, the greater Jewish community has come together in inspiring ways. Our visits to the various Jewish organizations made us feel like a part of a huge Jewish family that cares for all of its members. From *Ieladeinu*, a center for children in abusive home situations, to *LeDor Vador*, a vibrant senior center with impressive programs, those we met were passionate about contributing positively to the Jewish community. In honoring the concept of *Klal Yisrael*, the mission of these organizations is assisting people while respecting their dignity as members of the Jewish people.

When speaking with representatives from *Comunidad Libertad* and *Fundación*

*Judaica*, they identified three ways to strengthen the Jewish community: 1) Open our doors, be welcoming and inclusive, 2) Emphasize Jewish education to deepen the connection to our roots, and 3) Maintain a strong and committed relationship with Israel. We were told time and again that in Argentina, Judaism doesn't break into Movements the way we understand them in North America or even Israel. Based on these priorities, it seems that the goals of Progressive Judaism are shared across borders and Movement boundaries.

We were asked on more than one occasion what we were doing at “the end of the earth” (by which they meant the tip of South America). While this experience represents a different part of each of our Jewish journeys, one of the rabbis we met put into words what many of us were feeling. He explained in Hebrew, “For you to know about this community and tell our story is special to us, but it also strengthens your communities as we expand our Jewish family.” Most Jews came to Argentina holding fast to their immigrant identity, but it is clear that a truly blended Argentine-Jewish identity has emerged, full of potential and hope for the future.

**Alexandra Kurland '20** (Wellesley College, B.A. in Music) is the student cantor at Congregation Emanu-El of the City of New York, an ARZA Fellow, and recipient of the Cantor Bruce Ruben Scholarship.

**Erin Binder '18, '21** (George Washington University, B.A. in International Affairs; New York University, M.S. in Global Affairs) is the education engagement intern at Temple Shaaray Tefila in New York City and the recipient of the Jim Joseph Foundation Scholarship, HUC-JIR School of Education Scholarship, and UJA Scholarship.

# “NU, RABBI?”

## POSES COMPLEX QUESTIONS

Wondering what our students have to say about sin, prayer, the Messiah? “Nu, Rabbi?” a series of half-hour podcasts initiated and produced by rabbinical students Andrue Kahn ’18 and Joshua Mikutis ’18, MAJNM ’17, provides a platform for students to discuss deep religious issues that have a bearing on all of our lives today. Students express themselves in personal, unrehearsed statements, all the while backing up their ideas with classroom learning. With multiple voices and music, each podcast is experiential, a “meditation” on a theme.

“These are the ideas and conversations that brought us here to study at HUC-JIR,” explains Kahn. “Our students have something important to say, and our

podcasts get the message across. By training students to communicate in this medium, they develop valuable skills to enrich the Reform Movement and Judaism.”

“Our podcasts offer an invitation to listeners, regardless of their observance and literacy, to participate in great Jewish conversations about complex questions,” adds Mikutis. “Our goal is to demonstrate that Jewish texts and sources are worth studying and are relevant to our time.”

“Nu, Rabbi?” is sponsored by the Be Wise Fellowship in Jewish Entrepreneurialism on the New York campus, which challenges students to experiment with innovative strategies to engage others in Jewish learning, and is supported by Elizabeth and Steven Gruber of the Eastern Region Board of Overseers.

**Listen to “Nu, Rabbi?” at [huc.edu/Chronicle17/Nu-Rabbi](http://huc.edu/Chronicle17/Nu-Rabbi)**

**Andrue Kahn '18** (Kenyon College, B.A. in Religious Studies; Queens University, M.A. in Religion and Modernity; Jewish Theological Seminary, M.A. in Tanakh) is the rabbinical intern at East End Temple in New York City and the recipient of the Temple Rodef Shalom of Falls Church, VA Scholarship and the Lennell G. and Harvey H. Ammerman Endowed Scholarship.

**Joshua Mikutis '18, MAJNM '17** (Haverford College, B.A. in History and Religion) Charter and private school educator in Boston and Dayton; immigration protection unit at NY Legal Assistance Group; JDC Moscow, Pesach Project in FSU, and Netzer summer camp in Minsk, is the rabbinical intern at the 92<sup>nd</sup> Street Y and the recipient of the Rabbi Julius and Margaret Mark Memorial Endowed Scholarship.

What is sin?  
Is there a Messiah?  
How do you feel  
about prayer?



Paolo Mastrangelo



# EIGHT DAYS, FIVE SEDEERS

**Robert Friedman, Rabbinical Student '19**

This Passover, I embarked on an eight-day, 2,300-mile journey through the American South, visiting five communities from Mississippi to Virginia and leading them in Passover-themed programming as a representative of the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life (ISJL).

The ISJL's team of Rabbis Jeremy Simons '14 and Matthew Dreffin '13/ MAJE '11, act as traveling rabbis across 13 states. They lead Shabbat, life cycle, and holiday programming among the dozens of congregations without full-time rabbis, regardless of their congregational size or financial assets.

One of the ISJL's most successful rabbinical programs is the Passover Pilgrimage, now in its seventh year, which sends rabbis on a whirlwind tour to bring Passover-based programming to as many communities as possible during the week of the holiday. Having served as the ISJL's rabbinical intern in the summer of 2016, it was my pleasure to join them on the Pilgrimage, reflected in these snapshots of memorable moments.

## **Temple B'nai Israel, Natchez, MS, April 7-8**

Nestled along a bend of the Mississippi River, Natchez was the first permanent Jewish community in Mississippi, with a Jewish presence in the heart of the downtown area for nearly 175 years. As with many cities in the South, however, the Jewish community is aging and shrinking as younger Jews move to larger cities.

But experiencing the seder I led, one would have no idea. The 60 people in attendance filled the basement social hall of the landmark synagogue with prayers, songs, and conversations, and the home-cooked meal by one of the synagogue members filled the hearts and stomachs of everyone in attendance. Seeing Jews, Catholics, and Episcopalians sitting together brought new meaning to one of the most well-known lines of the Haggadah: "Let all who are hungry come and eat."

## **Temple B'nai Israel, Hattiesburg, MS, April 10**

The three pieces of matzah on the seder table are sometimes interpreted to represent the past, present, and future. The middle matzah, the present, is the one that is broken to represent the imperfect world in which we dwell. While it is important to note

all three pieces, this seder drew me much more to the third piece of matzah, symbolizing the future.

Unlike the many small communities that are contracting due to the younger generations moving away, Hattiesburg is the opposite. There were nearly 70 people in attendance of all backgrounds and ages, and nothing made me happier

than seeing the 15 children who were there. The children were seated up front at the same table with me, signaling our shared hopes for the future of communities like Hattiesburg.

## **The Upper Cumberland Jewish Community, Crossville, TN, April 12**

When the ISJL was founded in 1986, it was created as a museum designed to preserve the sacred artifacts of dwindling Southern congregations. Today, the ISJL is revitalizing small communities by loaning these ritual objects to them. I had the pleasure to partake in such a loan in Crossville.

A family requested a long-term loan of a Torah scroll from the ISJL for the community, which does not have a permanent building or sacred objects. Since very few people knew that the Torah was going to be delivered, we decided to surprise the community by having it be the reward for the *afkomen*. Seeing the joyful reaction of 80 Jews and non-Jews as we revealed the Torah scroll to them is something I will never forget.

For many of these small communities, consistent worship is dependent upon lay leadership, as a steady rabbinical presence cannot be taken for granted. When they do receive a visiting rabbi, they are incredibly appreciative. I loved being able to lead them in Shabbat prayer and holiday celebration. The passion and enthusiasm with which they filled their historic venues was truly uplifting and made our Passover a season of *shalom*, peace, and wholeness.

**Robert Friedman '19** (Vanderbilt University, B.A. in History and Jewish Studies; Jewish Theological Seminary, M.A. in Hebrew Bible and Its Interpretation) is the spiritual counseling intern at Beit T'Shuvah in Los Angeles and student rabbi of Temple Beth Torah in Ridgecrest, CA, and is the recipient of the Rabbi Leonard I. Beerman Endowed Scholarship and Rabbi Richard S. Sternberger Endowed Scholarship.

# A VISION FOR HUC-JIR'S FUTURE

## / What demographic trends concern you?



**CANTOR  
RICHARD COHN '92,  
DIRECTOR, DEBBIE  
FRIEDMAN SCHOOL  
OF SACRED MUSIC**

We will see a different landscape of how Jewish people gather to practice their Judaism and engage with each other. The assumptions that have prevailed in the past will be replaced with a more fluid communal environment. Institutions will only be successful to the extent that they are able to engage people to experience Judaism at the center of their life practice. Millennials will want to belong if the community gives them something that inspires them.



**MIRIAM HELLER  
STERN, PH.D.,  
DIRECTOR,  
SCHOOL OF  
EDUCATION**

The times we live in have been described as the age of fracture, the digital age, and an era of disruption. How will Jewish educators capitalize on the innovative spirit that this moment in history has to offer, and respond with resilience when societal trends impede our fulfillment? The Jewish community needs more high-caliber educators who can engage, teach, and lead with creativity, authenticity, and authority; who understand and are responsive to the distinct needs of diverse learners; who can weave community across dissent; who can attract and anchor a population that is perennially distracted; who can introduce compelling new programs to existing institutions and develop entrepreneurial learning spaces. In this era of change, we need educators who can plan and pivot intentionally as a future that is both promising and daunting unfolds.



**ERIK LUDWIG,  
DIRECTOR,  
ZELIKOW  
SCHOOL  
OF JEWISH  
NONPROFIT  
MANAGEMENT**

The Zelikow School's educational approach is based on problem finding and applying design thinking to the practice of nonprofit management. We believe in getting your hands dirty – that the learning that takes place in our field placements and internships is as valuable as what students learn in the classroom. With baby boomers headed into retirement over the next ten years, Jewish organizations will experience an unprecedented shift in leadership with some 70% of executives retiring – a shift that has the potential to disrupt the \$26 billion Jewish nonprofit industry. We are working towards a different future by educating leaders with the nonprofit know-how to run the business of Jewish life.

## / What about the shift in Jewish identity?



**RABBI  
JONATHAN  
COHEN '12, PH.D.,  
DEAN, CINCINNATI**

Interfaith families, products of interfaith families, and those establishing interfaith families are a growing constituency that demands our attention within and outside of our congregations. An increasing number of our students come from interfaith families and can help us understand where people are. We must look toward the non-Jews who touch our constituents' lives. What opportunities do we have to advance our learning, heritage, and values to grow the Jewish world in a lasting way? How do we forge relationships with non-Jewish clergy, have a presence in their churches where we may encounter Jews, and have meaningful conversations that can reach them and help them grow their Jewish identities? Our survival as a Movement in part depends on this.

**HUC-JIR'S strategic planning process is assessing and formulating our role in the new landscape of a changing demography and shifting communal structures in North American Jewish life. We invited HUC-JIR's program directors to reflect on these emerging trends as we shape the mission and vision of HUC-JIR's leadership development initiatives, now and in the future.**

## **/ How are you training the next generation of rabbis to identify and address emerging trends?**



**RABBI MICHAEL  
MARMOR '92, PH.D.,  
JACK, JOSEPH  
AND MORTON  
MANDEL PROVOST**

Dr. Arnold Jacob Wolf's definition of a seminary at its best as "a scholarly community of concern and creativity" is guiding our thinking during our current curriculum review process, which was last studied in 2001. We have identified four areas for exploration by committees comprised of faculty, guest scholars, and students: the conceptual underpinnings and narrative of the curriculum; the centrality of Hebrew for the contemporary Reform rabbi and how Hebrew relates to text study

and Israel engagement; the transitioning of students to the real world during their 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> years through capstone projects, theses, and interface with the field, congregational and beyond; and the coherence of the academic, spiritual, and professional aspects of the program for greater integration, reflection, and balance.

Our four areas of curricular exploration speak to the changing face of the community and the reality our rabbis are entering. When I talk with alumni, while most of them go into pulpits, it is also true that more are going into variegated rabbinates, with some years in Hillel, in a start-up, and in a pulpit. We want to make sure that however the rabbinate changes tomorrow, the curriculum's core competencies prepare them to be both change agents and depth agents. Like medical school, our students need to do rotations. We imagine a rabbi who manages to combine book learning with a strong affinity and access to the sources of Jewish tradition; someone who is personally and spiritually engaged, with the professional skills to do complicated sets of tasks within congregations and beyond. There are more expectations of the rabbi today, who is asked to juggle multiple identities as entrepreneur, CEO, fund raiser, and community organizer.

**COHEN:** By integrating classroom learning with experimental and experiential service learning through the Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati Fellows Program, we enable our students to get to know the major institutions and constituencies of the larger Jewish community – from Jewish Family Services, the local retirement community, and the Holocaust & Humanity Center, to the JCC, Federation, the Jewish high school, and campus Hillel. Our students have the opportunity to reflect on what it means to be a Reform rabbi in these contexts, and how to apply their values and expression of faith in these settings. They emerge with a greater understanding of the post-denominational world in which they live and develop their distinctive voices. What message are they bringing that others are not? Furthermore, just as rabbis create synagogues, synagogues create rabbis. As we deal with Millennials who have different attitudes regarding membership and philanthropy, the role of the rabbi and the synagogue will change.



**RABBI DVORA  
WEISBERG '11,  
PH.D., DIRECTOR,  
SCHOOL OF  
RABBINICAL  
STUDIES,  
LOS ANGELES**

Traditionally, we have trained rabbis to work within existing institutions and we knew what those institutions looked like. It is difficult to know what they will look like in the future, and even more challenging to imagine institutions that don't yet exist and to work beyond an institution. It is essential that we listen to our students – they have a better understanding of what is going on out there, and why their peers are joining synagogues or not. We need to broaden our educational opportunities and internships for individual students

who want to work with a specific community, beyond the brick and mortar boundaries of the synagogue, and help them develop the special skills to do so in addition to the core skills of preaching, teaching, knowing Jewish text, and offering pastoral care. We need to signal to our students that their individuality and vision, even if strange and unfamiliar to us, is supported and nurtured by a 4<sup>th</sup>- and 5<sup>th</sup>-year curriculum that is more flexible, with electives and field work that allow them to learn what they want to learn. How do we attract students who want

to be other kinds of rabbis, who would make our student population more diverse and interesting, and energize our classrooms with different perspectives to create an atmosphere in which everyone can grow?

## What roles do the cantor, educator, and nonprofit executive play in these shifting realities?

**STERN:** Educators need to respond to every learner individually, and simultaneously design programs with a holistic understanding of Jewish life in America today. The field has expanded from a narrow focus on literacy to include growth, transformation, and belonging in community. Learning experiences can be created anywhere and for anyone. We need more educators who are prepared with the skills, knowledge, and dispositions to effectively enable contemporary American Jews to access Jewish wisdom and connectedness at the key moments in their lives when they need them most.

**COHN:** Jewish music plays an extremely important role. Cantors can convey core texts, concepts, and spiritual priorities through music, transcending synagogue boundaries to bring spiritual values into the larger culture. Today's cantors are imaginative and creative collaborators with their rabbinical, educational, communal, and other specialized partners. The synergistic nature of these roles is essential to the success of Reform Judaism going forward. We are creating a cantorial curriculum that provides growth for the entire individual by integrating Hebrew language, spiritual development, biblical studies, musical repertoire, pastoral care, service leadership, and community engagement into one whole tapestry, in which the future cantor plays a central, organizing role. All of this needs to be explored while in school, where students can be exposed to emerging initiatives in synagogue renewal; visiting artists and clergy who are galvanizing their communities; versatile and individualized modeling of the cantorial vocation to suit a broad range of placement possibilities; and relational as well as pragmatic skills for the cantorate, including

interpersonal acumen, infrastructure managerial expertise, and entrepreneurship – all of which are increasingly important to many congregations.

**STERN:** Our visioning process is aimed at continually realigning our educational approach with the demands of the world around us, while leading with Jewish and progressive educational values as a beacon for the field. We are so proud of our alumni, who serve as visionary educational leaders in every type of Jewish educational setting: congregations, camps, day schools, youth movements, early childhood centers, Hillels, and communal agencies and organizations with regional and national influence. Our alumni are increasingly among the leadership ranks of national professional networks and organizations and are sought after coaches and consultants who are enriching Jewish educational offerings across the country.

**LUDWIG:** The Zelikow School exists to serve the people who are served by the more than 3,600 Jewish nonprofit organizations that produce tangible results in the areas of social and human services, including food justice, summer camps, human rights, programs for people with disabilities, and more. Our graduates shape the Jewish future by taking leadership roles at some of the largest nonprofit organizations, including Jewish Federations, Jewish Community Centers, Jewish Family & Children's Services, and Jewish Foundations, as well as innovating new responses to Jewish life at nonprofit startups. We use creativity to problem find and design a more perfect world.

We believe there is a lot to learn from missing the mark. There is also a lot to learn by doing. Our internships and projects provide a lab for students to practice and develop their nonprofit expertise with people who care about their career.

## What are your goals for your students?

**WEISBERG:** Our students still need the fundamentals – that's why they are coming here. You have to know the tradition before you create the new. But the hallmark of our program is the integration of the academic and the practical, with

We need more educators who are prepared with the skills, knowledge, and dispositions to effectively enable contemporary American Jews to access Jewish wisdom and connectedness at the key moments in their lives when they need them most.

Dr. Miriam Heller Stern

supervision and mentorship as a cornerstone. We must provide an environment in which they can experiment – applying innovative approaches to spirituality and worship, interweaving music and interpretations in new ways that they can model and take with them; creating new and shorter formats for sermons and *divrei Torah* to apply to different communities and moments; developing entrepreneurial projects that foster engagement in Jewish life and practice. They should be exposed to successful alternative models of community building that can be adapted to synagogue communities. Our students also learn how congregations integrate marginalized segments into their communities, from LGBTQ inclusion to inclusion for those with disabilities and special needs.

**COHN:** Our emerging cantors should be the very best liturgical and communal musicians possible. The expansion of cantorial roles as educators, pastoral caregivers, and community organizers shouldn't diminish the essential value of their being outstanding interpretive communicators of Jewish song. They are the ambassadors of global Jewish music for people living in a world culture today.

**STERN:** We are introducing new elements of creative practice into our M.A. programs, inviting guest teaching artists to work with our faculty and students. We have already experimented with theater, music, and digital storytelling, and expect to grow this area of experience. Cohort-based creative activities serve to expand the imagination, increase tolerance for risk-taking and experimentation, and lead learners to discover new perspectives. Jewish creative adaptation is only possible if educators intentionally engender creativity as we build community and elevate literacy.

**LUDWIG:** We like students who live values first. Nonprofit leadership is about repairing the world. It is a way to challenge the status quo and to make a career in making good happen. Our students and 600+ alumni are a community of difference makers with global reach and impact. They effect change. We embrace diversity, pluralism, and are non-denominational. Our students come from a spectrum of backgrounds, knowledge sets, and geographies. They discover at HUC-JIR a faculty who care

and a place where Jewish wisdom and values are intertwined to reinforce our educational practices and the work we inspire in the nonprofit ecosystem.

## What relevance will Reform Judaism have in the future?

**COHN:** The synagogue should be the vessel in which we make the connections to the cultures of other faiths, of all people with whom we share a common stake in the civilization on our planet. Cantors have the ability to interpret that kind of dynamic, intercultural, humanistic vision for collaborative community building. Our Jewish survival depends on being part of a universal community with freedom of expression, and with the freedom to live in deep connection with others, thereby edifying the image of God.

**COHEN:** We are the pioneers in the inclusion of women as clergy and LGBTQI as part of our big tent Reform Movement, but what are the overarching values we believe in going forward? We are strengthening our curriculum in Reform Judaism's history, liturgy, and theology so that our students can think about what this has meant in the past and what inspires them for the future. How will we express our Judaism, advocate for it, and engage others? If we become a minority religious movement through shifting demography, what will be our impact on social policy? What will happen to our access to Congress, the Senate, State Legislature, Governors?

Our Jewish survival depends on being part of a universal community with freedom of expression, and with the freedom to live in deep connection with others, thereby edifying the image of God.

Cantor Richard Cohn

**WEISBERG:** If we really believe that Judaism has eternal values, then how do we make that Judaism speak in conversation with Jews who are so incredibly different culturally, economically, and sociologically than the Jews for whom these texts were written? We are educating those who will educate others.

**LUDWIG:** Our vision is a vibrant Jewish community. We make leaders. Leaders make organizations. Organizations strengthen community.

# AROUND CAMPUS

## KORET FOUNDATION SCHOLARS IN YEAR-IN-ISRAEL PROGRAM / JERUSALEM

Forty-five first-year rabbinical, cantorial, and education students at the Taube Family Campus in Jerusalem were all guaranteed free tuition as Koret Foundation Scholars for their required year of study in Israel. The \$3.5 million grant from the Koret Foundation provides both tuition and program support over three years. Rabbi Aaron Panken (below at right) stated, “We are enormously grateful to the Koret Foundation for their commitment to our strategic vision of advancing Jewish higher education that is imbued with a love for Israel and Jewish peoplehood. The Koret Foundation Scholars will build and sustain the crucial sense of mutual responsibility – *arevut* – between North American Jewish communities and the State and people of Israel for generations to come.”



## SYMPOSIUM ONE: CRAFTING JEWISH LIFE IN A COMPLEX RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE

This inaugural symposium explored themes, presentations, and discussions by a broad range of leading scholars that continue to be ever more timely and pertinent today. Visit the [SYMPOSIUM ONE VIDEO ARCHIVE](#) to witness or re-experience the Symposium One learning environment, share the materials with your congregations and family members, or use them as an educational resource for your students. In addition to the video footage, you will find podcast versions of the presentations and discussions, as well as corresponding outlines and PowerPoint Presentations.

Watch / Listen / Learn at [huc.edu/symposium-one-video-archive](http://huc.edu/symposium-one-video-archive)

SAVE  
THE DATE:  
SYMPOSIUM 2:  
“THESE TRUTHS WE  
HOLD: JUDAISM IN THE  
AGE OF TRUTHINESS”  
November 11-12, 2018  
Los Angeles



Rabbi David Aaron, Ph.D., addressing “Symposium One.”

# HEALING HATRED:

## SPIRITUAL CHALLENGES IN THE CONTEXT OF POLITICAL CONFLICT / JERUSALEM

Focusing on the spiritual aspects of coping with political conflict in an interfaith context, this conference held at HUC-JIR in Jerusalem and in Bethlehem and Beit Jala was designed to open new paths for healing and overcoming hostility and controversy. Religious leaders, psychologists, educators, and spiritual caregivers explored a broad range of issues, including forgiveness, response to trauma, indifference to suffering, abuse of religion in the name of politics, bereavement, and alternatives to violence.

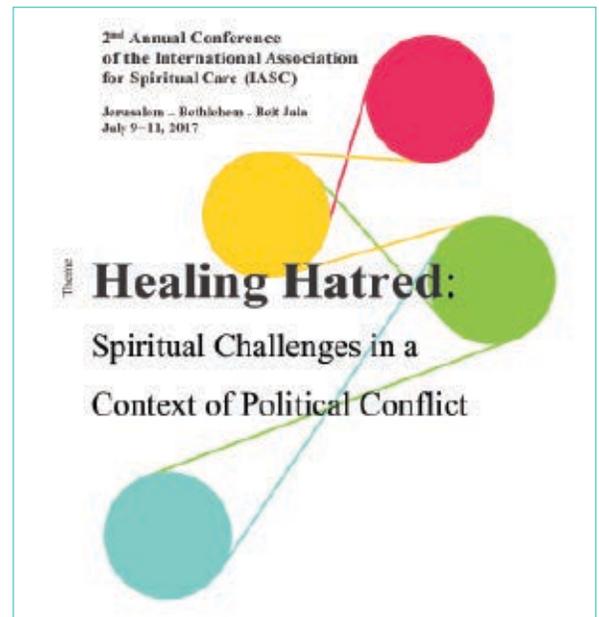
Dr. Ruhama Weiss, Director of the HUC-JIR Blaustein Center for Pastoral Counseling, said, “This conference was an important product of our ongoing ‘Healing Hatred’ programs, which contribute to coping with the political situation. We are teaching spiritual tools that can help us understand the ‘other’ and enable us to uphold the notion that each person is created *b’tzelem Elohim*, in the image of God.”

“The dynamic of competitive suffering, arguing, of each side becoming entrenched in their stance in opposition to the ‘other,’ is avoided,” added Dr. Sarah Bernstein, Executive Director of the Rossing Center for Education and Dialogue. “Rather, the dynamic is of honest sharing, empathy, understanding, and healing.”

This conference, convened by the International Association for Spiritual Care, was a joint project of the Rossing Center for Education and Dialogue, HUC-JIR, and the Holy Land Trust, who have worked together over the last four years to develop a new model for interfaith dialogue in situations of national conflict.



Rabbi Aaron Panken (right) and Dr. Ruhama Weiss (left) in a roundtable discussion with Israeli and Palestinian participants in the “Healing Hatred” conference.



## NEW DEGREE PROGRAMS AT ZELIKOW SCHOOL

The Zelikow School of Jewish Nonprofit Management launched the **Master of Science in Organizational Leadership**, a 14-month accelerated program designed for working professionals or students seeking to fast-track their education and launch their career, and the **Certificate in Jewish Organizational Leadership**, a six-week summer program designed for professionals seeking to take the next step in their career path as leaders in Jewish organizations. [zsjnm.huc.edu/our-programs](http://zsjnm.huc.edu/our-programs)

From left: Rabbinical, education, and Jewish nonprofit management student Liora Alban, Jewish nonprofit management/MPA student Leah Paz, Jewish nonprofit management and education student Mikah Atkind, and Jewish nonprofit management/MSW student Sarah Horvitz with Jay Geller (center), HUC-JIR Governor and Chair, Zelikow School Advisory Committee, at the Zelikow School’s annual Geller-Gallagher Leadership Institute.



## THE 2017 GOLDEN HANASSI FELLOWS

Established by Suzanne and John Golden, Vice Chair, Board of Governors, and the Golden Family Foundation, this innovative program has placed 17 of our Israeli rabbinical students and recently ordained Israeli rabbis in North American Reform congregations for a residency that is mentored by leading North American Reform rabbis. “As we move farther away from generations with shared experiences, Israeli and American Jews need to understand more about each other,” states John Golden. “We are pleased that the Hanassi Fellowships enable our Israeli rabbinical students to be more deeply exposed to Reform Jewry in North America.” Upon their return to Israel, the Fellows are better able to engage Israelis who are seeking spiritual meaning.

Shani Ben Or, Golden Hanassi Fellow at Central Synagogue, New York City, stated: “I am learning how to be both a rabbi and a cantor, mentored by Rabbi Cantor Angela Buchdahl '99, '01 and her team. I work with *b'nai mitzvah* kids, lead Shabbat services, teach *parashat hashavua* classes, and rotate among the clergy as needed. I appreciate the open spirit of experimentation and the development toward formal structure. I am learning how to be a pioneer and how rabbis can incorporate music into their rabbinate.

Music is a means of transformation, breaking barriers, and molding relationships. Israel needs a bit of a push to advance in this arena.”

Yael Vargon, Golden Hanassi Fellow at Woodlands Community Temple, White Plains, NY, said: “I am inspired by how Rabbi Billy Dreskin '87 establishes long term, meaningful relationships with his congregants, providing spiritual guidance for a lifetime. I am learning new ways to bring Judaism into Israelis' lives beyond a singular life cycle moment and how to deepen their engagement by meeting them where they are, within and beyond the synagogue. Bringing Jewish experiences to Starbucks, people's homes, or the mall is something we should do in Israel, where the public sphere is dominated by the Orthodox. We can transform it by making it more liberal.”

**Rabbi Aaron Panken (center) with 2017 Golden Hanassi Fellows: (from left) Shlomo Zagman (Temple Sholom of West Essex, Cedar Grove, NJ), Shani Ben Or (Central Synagogue, New York City), Rachel Druck (Larchmont Temple, Larchmont, NY), Yael Vargon (Woodlands Community Temple, White Plains, NY), Olya Weinstein (Temple Israel of New Rochelle, NY), and Binyamin Minich (Temple Beth El of Northern Westchester, Chappaqua, NY).**



Keynote speaker Jonathan Kozol

### **POVERTY, WELFARE AND RELIGION SYMPOSIUM / CINCINNATI**

This Symposium brought together prominent local and national clergy, academics, advocates, community activists, service providers, and Cincinnati public school students and teachers. Presentations focused on labor organization; politics and public policy; ethics, religion, and poverty; racism and working poverty; gentrification and housing; education and youth services; and healthcare issues.

Organized in partnership with Jewish Family Service and the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, the symposium was sponsored by the Dr. Norma K. and Donald J. Stone Fund of the HUC-JIR Center for Ethics and Contemporary Issues.

Watch keynote speaker Jonathan Kozol on “Overview of Working Poverty in the U.S.”:

[huc.edu/Chronicle17/Kozol](http://huc.edu/Chronicle17/Kozol)

## SUMMER BEIT MIDRASH / LOS ANGELES

**6 students, 6 hours a day, 4 days a week, 8 weeks.** Add these up and you have a unique intensive summer study opportunity, where students dive deep into Jewish text with faculty and alumni guests.

**What did they learn?** Jewish approaches to the binding of Isaac in modern Hebrew poetry, midrash, medieval commentary and liturgy, and Talmud study.

**How did they learn?** “*Hevruta* with a study partner was an invaluable tool for preparing for class and figuring out how I prefer to learn. Our instructors expected so much from us and pushed us to that level. They engaged us to think deeply.”



**What do they say?** “I noticed a significant growth in my text skills throughout the summer. This was one of my favorite HUC-JIR learning experiences.”

The Summer Beit Midrash class taught by Rabbi William Cutter '65, Ph.D., Steinberg Emeritus Professor of Human Relations, Skirball Campus/HUC-JIR/Los Angeles.

*The Beit Midrash is made possible through the generosity of Rabbi Zachary Shapiro and LA City Controller Ron Galperin, Drs. Patricia and Richard Gibbs, and the Frederick J. Isaac Philanthropic Fund.*

## 10 Things You Should Know About the HUC-JIR Soup Kitchen/New York

- 1/ Established in the late 1980s by our students to serve the growing plight of homeless persons.
- 2/ 156,000 hungry neighbors have been served to date.
- 3/ Freshly cooked meals are prepared by our students and volunteers every Monday night, 52 weeks a year.
- 4/ Teenage and adult volunteer groups from throughout the greater tri-state area participate through hands-on service, study, and reflection on values of social justice.
- 5/ Our newly renovated, spacious dining room provides sit-down service and conversation with volunteers at tables set with linens and floral centerpieces.
- 6/ Live piano music accompanying the dinner meal is performed by students and volunteers.
- 7/ The HUC-JIR Museum gallery adjacent to the dining room provides a unique art experience welcoming homeless people.
- 8/ Free seasonal clothing, shoes, and portable hygiene supplies are distributed.
- 9/ Pro bono legal aid to guests is provided by NYU Law School.
- 10/ Volunteer groups are invited to participate! Contact: [hucsoupkitchen@gmail.com](mailto:hucsoupkitchen@gmail.com)



From left: Students affixing the *mezuzah* on the newly renovated kitchen's doorpost; Students and volunteers preparing to feed 100 guests; Distributing free clothing and other necessities; Live piano music to entertain the guests. (Photos: Ellen Dubin)

*The renovation of the Soup Kitchen was generously supported by Bonnie Littman Gatof, USAI Lighting; Lisa Messinger and Rabbi Aaron Panken, The Messinger Foundation; Rabbi Sari Laufer and Congregation Rodeph Sholom; and the Schnur Family, along with many other donors.*

**CONTACT: [HUCSOUPKITCHEN@GMAIL.COM](mailto:HUCSOUPKITCHEN@GMAIL.COM)**

# AROUND HUC-JIR

## New Provost Appointed

**Rabbi Andrea L. Weiss '93, Ph.D.**, Associate Professor of Bible at HUC-JIR/New York, has been appointed the new Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Provost, the chief academic officer of our institution, effective July 1, 2018.

Rabbi Aaron Panken stated, “Dr. Weiss is a much beloved member of our faculty and intellectual leader on the New York campus, across the Reform Movement, in the world of academe, and far beyond. She is an extraordinary scholar who works at the critical intersection of religious life and intellectual rigor and knows how to create collaborative and successful endeavors that will better every aspect of our mission.”

Dr. Weiss studied at HUC-JIR's Los Angeles and New York campuses, and was ordained by HUC-JIR in 1993. She completed her Ph.D. at the University of Pennsylvania's Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations.

Dr. Weiss is the author of numerous books and articles, including *Figurative Language in Biblical Prose Narrative: Metaphor in the Book of Samuel* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), and she served as the Associate Editor of *The Women's Torah Commentary* (URJ Press, 2008), which won the Jewish Book Council's 2008 Everett Family Foundation Jewish Book of the Year Award. She also created a highly innovative response to the emerging political landscape known as *American Values Religious Voices: 100 Days, 100 Letters* (see page 40).

Dr. Weiss's leadership within HUC-JIR has helped reshape curriculum for the rabbinical program across the campuses and built a deeper sense of community at the New York campus. She developed the Worship Working Group in 2003 and has continued to oversee this group of students and faculty who work together to reflect on and improve worship there. She has played a leadership role in major initiatives such as the Spirituality Initiative of the New York School, the Mandel Initiative in Building Capacity for Visionary Leadership, and the annual New York Kallah.

Dr. Weiss succeeds **Rabbi Michael Marmur '92, Ph.D.**, who has served with distinction as the Jack, Joseph and Monton Mandel Provost for the past seven years, after previously having served as Dean of the Taube Family Campus in Jerusalem and as Vice President for Academic Affairs. Dr. Marmur will move to full-time faculty duties at HUC-JIR/ Jerusalem as of June 30, 2018. Rabbi Panken noted, “Rabbi Marmur will continue teaching and leading at HUC-JIR in his characteristically brilliant way, and we look forward to reading his work and enjoying his teaching for many years to come. We are most grateful for his partnership and friendship, his enduring vision and creativity, and his thoughtful leadership of our institution over these many years. We wish him all the best as he makes this important professional transition and continues to contribute to the intellectual life of the Jewish community in Israel, North America, and around the world.”



*“I am honored to assume the role of Provost and build on the accomplishments of my predecessors. I look forward to working in collaboration with colleagues, students, and alumni on our four campuses to advance the mission of the College-Institute and to support our ongoing efforts to foster vibrant centers of Jewish learning preparing the newest generations of visionary Jewish leaders.”*

— Rabbi Andrea L. Weiss '93, Ph.D.

# New Leadership and Vision for the HUC-JIR Library Network



HUC-JIR's library network across our four campuses is recognized as one of the largest Judaica libraries in the world, second only to the National Library of Israel. The Klau Libraries in Cincinnati and New York, Abramov Library in Jerusalem, and Frances-Henry Library in Los Angeles are vital research resources for our students, faculty, and global scholars. **Yoram Bitton**, the newly appointed Director of Libraries, is ready to advance its vision and mission.

Bitton grew up in a Moroccan Jewish family in Israel, where he served in a special IDF unit in the Intelligence Division and received a B.A. in Talmud

and Jewish History from the Hebrew University. He earned the Master of Library Science degree from Queens College in New York, after which he catalogued Columbia University's collection of 1,000 Jewish manuscripts. In 2011 he joined our Klau Library in New York, bringing his broad expertise in poetry, Bible, exegesis, Talmud, Jewish law, mysticism, philosophy, and Jewish literature.

One of Bitton's first priorities as Director of Libraries is to leverage technology in preserving and sharing HUC-JIR's library network. His current focus is the Birnbaum and Offenbach Collections, the largest cantorial music collection in the world. These rare materials are in the process of being digitized, thanks to a pilot grant from Marilyn Ziering. Ardon Bar-Hama, who digitized the Vatican, Juilliard, and Oxford collections, has already digitized 50,000 images and is building the meta-data to accompany them. The goal is to create a website that will provide access to these catalogued materials.

"I feel privileged to lead our team of librarians ensuring preservation and access to our treasures," states Bitton, enumerating "one million volumes; over 2,500 manuscripts; well-known incunabula (pre-1501 books); 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century Hebrew printed books; special collections in Jewish law,

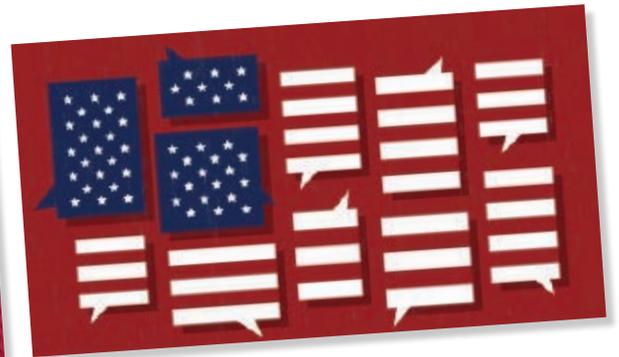
Jewish history, and Jewish literature, including the Bamberger Collection of Spinoza materials in Jerusalem; posters; stamps; maps; *megillot*; and the cantorial music collections. We hope to generate new publications, exhibitions, and enhanced online access to build awareness and share this precious cultural legacy with the world."



Eduard Birnbaum Music Manuscript Collection. Mus 124-1, page 10. *L'kha Dodi. Kabbalat Shabbat Service.*

# FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

## AMERICAN VALUES RELIGIOUS VOICES: 100 DAYS. 100 LETTERS.



What do kids at a Presbyterian church in Auburn, AL, have in common with kids at a Reform synagogue in Manhattan? What did it take to reestablish communication between two brothers who stopped talking during the 2016 presidential campaign, one a Republican and the other a Democrat? The answer to both questions is “American Values Religious Voices: 100 Days. 100 Letters.”

For the first 100 days of the Trump administration, American Values Religious Voices sent a letter a day from a scholar of religion to the President, Vice President, and Members of the 115th Congress. Each morning from January 20 to April 29, an email went out to over two thousand campaign subscribers with a link to the letter at the campaign website, [valuesandvoices.com](http://valuesandvoices.com). At the same time, the daily letter was publicized on social media and hard copies were mailed to the President and Vice President.

The aim of this national, nonpartisan campaign was to articulate core American values connected to our religious traditions: values like justice, compassion, and truth –



just to name a few. The letters were written by a diverse cadre of scholars. Elsie Stern, author of Letter 100, explains: “We are men and women, from red states and blue states. We identify as African-American, Asian, Latino, Native American, and White. We are Buddhists, Christians of varied denominations, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, and Sikhs.”

The letters responded in a timely and compelling manner to events unfolding in the first few months of the Trump administration, addressing issues like immigration, freedom of the press, budget cuts, dissent, environmental concerns, and more. Throughout the campaign, readers expressed gratitude for the letters,

which they described as an anchor and a lifeline, an “archive of compassion and democracy” and “living waters of sustenance and courage from deep ancient wells.”

Since the 100 days ended, American Values Religious Voices has continued to maintain an active social media presence by tweeting quotes from pertinent letters and compiling citations on Facebook in response to events like Hurricane Harvey, the DACA decision, the various health care bills, and the NFL protests.

American Values Religious Voices was created by **Rabbi Andrea L. Weiss '93, Ph.D.**, Associate Professor of Bible at HUC-JIR/ New York and incoming Mandel Provost, in partnership with Lisa Weinberger, Creative Director and Founder of Masters Group Design. The campaign was funded by the College-Institute, thanks to the support of HUC-JIR President Aaron Panken who saw the potential of this project as a way to add a powerful and relevant religious voice to our public discourse about political issues and current events.



## Talks at Google/“Queer Faith: Navigating Intersecting Identities”

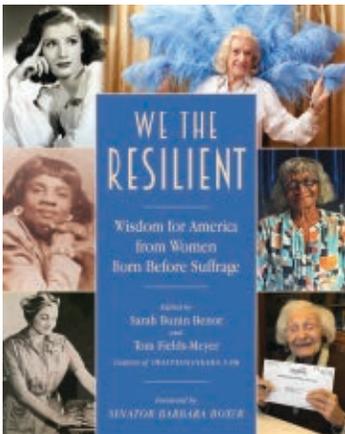
As Google describes it: “We wanted to put all of the world’s most influential thinkers, creators, makers, and doers in the same room, so you could hear what they have to say. But we couldn’t fit them all in. So we created *Talks at Google*.”

**Rabbi Nancy H. Wiener '90, D.Min. '94**, Steinberg Chair in Human Relations and Director, Blaustein Center for Pastoral Counseling, HUC-JIR/New York, was invited by *Talks at Google* to participate

in an interfaith panel addressing issues of intersectionality, LGBTQ+, and religious identity. She joined other LGBTQ+-identified religious leaders to discuss their own journeys and to share thoughts on how others who might be struggling to reconcile their religious identity and sexual orientation might find ways to harmonize them. Each panelist also reflected on how their own faith tradition’s attitudes and policies related to LGBTQ+

individuals and families have evolved over time. Rabbi Wiener joined panelists Faisal Alam, Founder of the Al-Fatiha Foundation for the promotion of human and civil rights for LGBTQ+ Muslims; Barbara Joshin O’Hara, Zen Buddhist Sensei and founder of an inclusive practice in New York City; and Kelsey Brown, a Lutheran seminary student and activist.

**Watch the panel discussion:**  
[huc.edu/Chronicle17/Wiener](http://huc.edu/Chronicle17/Wiener)



### WE THE RESILIENT: WISDOM FOR AMERICA FROM WOMEN BORN BEFORE SUFFRAGE

Sarah Bunin Benor, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Contemporary Jewish Studies, Skillball Campus/HUC-JIR/ Los Angeles and Tom Fields-Meyer  
 Luminare Press, 2017

“This book features reflections from 78 American women, ages 96-104, all born before the 19th Amendment gave women the right to vote in 1920. The women explain how they have overcome personal challenges and faced sexism, and they offer advice about how the country can face the future. Some women recall selling candy bars or homemade rugs during the Depression. Others recount working in factories during World War II while their boyfriends or husbands were at war. Many express concern today: ‘I would love to push my walker into mass protests,’ says one 103-year-old.”

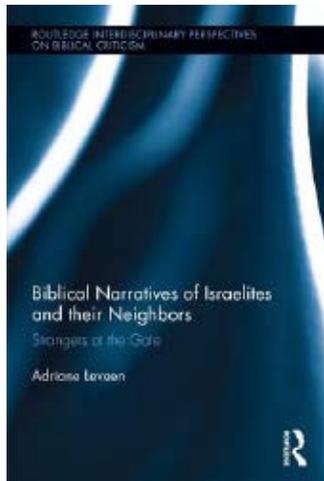


### MORE THAN MANAGING: THE RELENTLESS PURSUIT OF EFFECTIVE JEWISH LEADERSHIP

Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman '69, Ph.D. '73, Stephen and Barbara Friedman Chair in Liturgy, Worship, and Ritual, HUC-JIR/New York  
 Jewish Lights Publishing, 2016

“As interest in leadership mounts everywhere, increasing numbers of Jews want to know how leadership in general intersects with Judaism in particular. Inspired by the pioneering work of Leslie Wexner, this groundbreaking book explores that intersection by assembling for the first time 50 scholars of leadership and Jewish studies with practitioners, including leading rabbis, professionals, and volunteers. It surveys leadership as the growing field that it is, and how attention to leadership is changing the world in which we live.”

# FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS



## BIBLICAL NARRATIVES OF ISRAELITES AND THEIR NEIGHBORS: STRANGERS AT THE GATE

Adriane Leveen, Ph.D., Senior Lecturer in Hebrew Bible; Lead Specialist, Jim Joseph Initiatives

Routledge, 2017

“After 9/11, I was compelled to dig deeper into our sacred tradition’s views of violence and of other peoples. As a biblical scholar I turned to Torah and the stories it told. By turning my gaze to those others, I discovered that encounters between the Israelites and their neighbors were rich, nuanced, and sometimes even humorous. Encounters with other peoples were

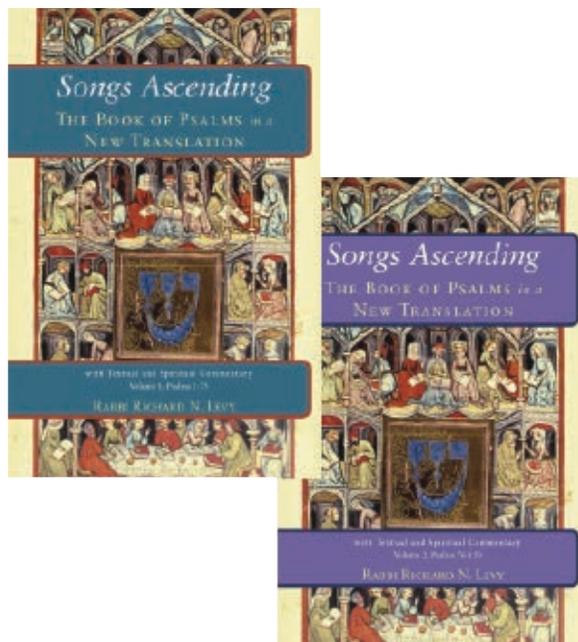
also among the most urgent matters explored in Biblical narratives. Violence and war were present but so too were stories of **tolerance, recurrent hospitality, and alliances built out of shared interests. My book concludes that biblical Israelites learned to co-exist with difference in the world because they had no choice. Strangers were at their borders and even at their gates.**”

## SONGS ASCENDING: THE BOOK OF PSALMS IN A NEW TRANSLATION WITH TEXTUAL AND SPIRITUAL COMMENTARY

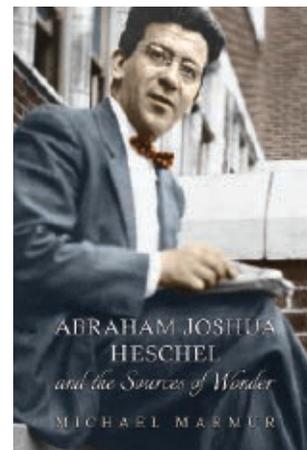
Rabbi Richard Levy '64, Rabbi Emeritus of the Synagogue, Skirball Campus/HUC-JIR/Los Angeles

CCAR Press, 2017

“Through psalms, the Jewish people’s collectively remembered experience of redemption and the ordering of chaos through Creation and Revelation become the heritage of each of us, ready for us to proclaim when the world around us turns stormy. The spiritual commentary asks: To what events, struggles, and triumphs in our lives might this psalm speak?”



Watch the College Commons interview with Rabbi Richard Levy: “Psalms: The Roots of Jewish Spirituality” [huc.edu/Chronicle17/Levy](http://huc.edu/Chronicle17/Levy)

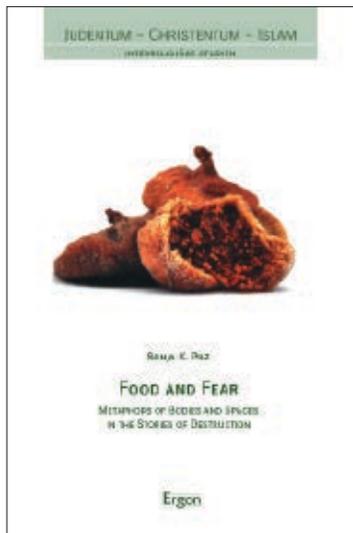


## ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL AND THE SOURCES OF WONDER

Rabbi Michael Marmor '92, Ph.D., Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Provost, HUC-JIR

University of Toronto Press, 2016

“By examining Heschel’s approach to the Bible, Rabbinic literature, medieval philosophy, mysticism, Hasidism, and more, a picture of Heschel’s dynamic approach to Jewish tradition emerges. To use his own terms, being a pioneer depends on also being an heir. This question of how we grapple with contemporary realities in the light of our dynamic tradition is one which has not lost its relevance. How can we root our politics, our spirituality, our communities, in the deep and varied soil of our tradition? As our world seems more polarized than ever, reading Heschel as he reads sources can help us come to terms with this most pressing of challenges.”

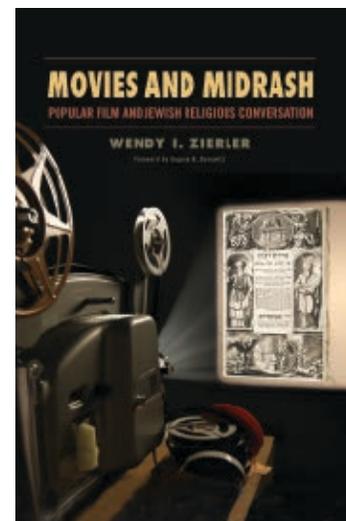


## FOOD AND FEAR: METAPHORS OF BODIES AND SPACES IN THE STORIES OF DESTRUCTION

Rabbi Sonja K. Pilz, Ph.D., Adjunct Faculty, Liturgy, Worship, and Ritual, HUC-JIR/New York

Ergon-Verlag, 2016

“The story of the escape of Yochanan ben Zakkai, the first century CE disciple of Hillel who requested of General Vespasian during the siege of Jerusalem in 70 CE that he spare Yavneh, has been read for centuries as the founding myth of Rabbinic Judaism. Yochanan’s story and the story of evolving Rabbinic Judaism is told by means of metaphors of the body, of food (from meat to flour), of spacial movements (from the Temple to Yavneh), and of literary characters that need to be read as synecoches for entire schools of thought.”



## MOVIES AND MIDRASH: POPULAR FILM AND JEWISH RELIGIOUS CONVERSATION

Wendy Zierler, Ph.D., Sigmund Falk Professor of Modern Jewish Literature and Feminist Studies, HUC-JIR/New York

SUNY Press, 2017

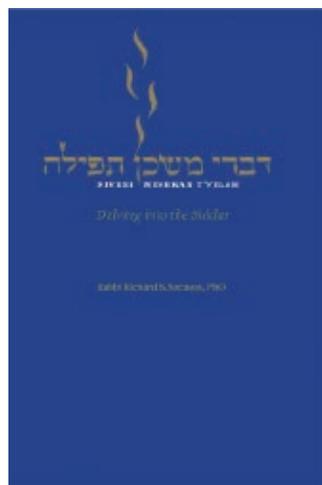
“Beginning in 2002, I team-taught a course called *Reel Theology* with Rabbi Dr. Eugene B. Borowitz, z”l. *Reel Theology* used popular films and novels as a springboard for text study and theological discussion, a method we called ‘inverted midrash,’ beginning with a close reading of a central religious theme as found in a significant, popular secular novel or film and then moving to an exploration of what Jewish text and thought say about the same theme. In developing the course, it became clear that there was no extant book that offered a sustained Jewish theological/textual engagement with film. *Midrash and Movies* is the first such book. Each chapter examines a different film in conjunction with a central Jewish religious theme and relevant texts.”

## DIVREI MISHKAN T’FILAH: DELVING INTO THE SIDUR

Rabbi Richard S. Sarason ’74, Ph.D., Professor of Rabbinic Literature and Thought; Director, Pines School of Graduate Studies, HUC/JIR Cincinnati

CCAR Press, 2017

“As *Mishkan T’filah* was being published in 2007, the Reform Movement’s Joint Commission on Worship, Music, and Religious Living’s working groups decided that a series of essays would help teach about the prayer book. This volume offers updated versions of my ‘Ten Minutes of Torah’ essays for the URJ’s daily e-mail blast during 2008-2013. They discuss the logic and meaning of the prayer or prayer section, its history, and its treatment historically in Reform prayer books.”



## YALTA: A TALMUDIC NOVEL

Ruhama Weiss, Ph.D., Director, Blaustein Center for Pastoral Counseling, Taube Family Campus/HUC-JIR/Jerusalem

הוצאת הקיבוץ המאוחד, 2017

“Yalta, a heroic figure from the 3rd-century CE, is the only Babylonian woman (mentioned by name) to have several sources dedicated to her life story in the Talmud. Making creative use of these traditions, the novel deals with maternal responsibility and the attempt to control one’s own destiny in a highly patriarchal society. I am a feminist who loves writing, studying, and teaching Talmud. I admire Yalta’s courage, independence, and *chutzpah* (audacity).”



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Top: (from left) New York Dinner Honorees Marjorie and Morgan Miller and Dinner Chairs Bob and Ellen Sunness, Eastern Region Board of Overseers, and Brenda and Burton Lehman, Board of Governors.

Middle: (from left) Los Angeles Dinner Honorees Rochelle Ginsburg, Rhea Coskey, and Peachy Levy; Women Alumnae Leaders of the West.

Bottom: (from left) Cincinnati Dinner Co-Chairs Leonard and Ann Berenfield; *Yedidit* Award recipients Jim and Vivian Schwab; Dinner Honorees Shannon and Lee Carter; Steve Mullinger, Dinner Co-Chair.

## THE DR. BERNARD HELLER FOUNDATION

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Dr. Bernard Heller Foundation

**THE JIM JOSEPH FOUNDATION** supported the Executive M.A. Program in Jewish Education with a **\$1.3 MILLION GRANT** over four years to strengthen the knowledge and skills of Jewish educational leaders in a part-time, flexible program.

**DR. MICHAEL ZELDIN ALUMNI-IN-RESIDENCE PROGRAM ENDOWMENT CAMPAIGN** raised over **\$200,000** with gifts from graduates of the Rhea Hirsch School of Education, the New York School of Education, and the Executive M.A. Program in Jewish Education, matched dollar-for-dollar by **Susan Kittner Hunting MAJE/MAJCS '80** and **Rabbi Geoffrey Hunting '91**.

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