

The Chronicle

HEBREW UNION COLLEGE - JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION/2006 ISSUE 67



In this issue:

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: AMBASSADOR DENNIS ROSS, DAN MERIDOR, DR. EUGENE B. BOROWITZ, DR. ALYSSA GRAY, DR. NELSON GLUECK

THE LAWS OF CHANGE: JEWISH LEGAL LITERATURE AT HUC-JIR AND IN REFORM SCHOLARSHIP TODAY

CREATING A CARING COMMUNITY: CLINICAL PASTORAL EDUCATION AT HUC-JIR/CINCINNATI

CALIFORNIA DREAMING: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF RABBI LEWIS M. BARTH, PH.D.

JEWISH VALUES AND INCLUSIVITY: THE INSTITUTE FOR JUDAISM AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

JOURNEYS TO NUREMBERG AND BERLIN

THE FIRST NICARAGUAN BAR MITZVAH IN OVER 50 YEARS

This issue of *The Chronicle* has as one of its features the recently completed biography that Jonathan Brown and Laurence Kutler have written about the life and work of Nelson Glueck. Glueck was not only the foremost biblical archeologist of his time, but also served with distinction for over two decades as President of HUC-JIR. It was he who made the initial decision that all rabbinical students at HUC-JIR be required to spend a mandatory year of study in Israel as a prerequisite for ordination. Glueck was also responsible for allowing Sally Priesand to study for the rabbinate, a momentous choice that opened the portals wide for women to enter the rabbinate. Under his leadership, the Graduate School expanded and flourished, and Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati merged with the Jewish Institute of Religion in New York during the first years of his presidency. Shortly thereafter, he directed that a branch of HUC-JIR be planted in Los Angeles and in the early 1960s he oversaw the construction of a campus in Jerusalem. All of these centers of learning blossomed and grew under his direction. Nelson Glueck established the basic parameters for the operation of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion today, and he surely made the College-Institute truly international in scope.

In their book, Brown and Kutler recount the ongoing trials and challenges that confronted Dr. Glueck during his presidency, and they quote him – in one critical instance – as saying, “We are at one of those junctures in the history of our college when we can proceed in any one of several directions. We can act with confidence and a certain calculated boldness and risk and thus meet the compelling needs of the present and obvious challenges of the future, or we can sit tight and inevitably go backwards. It is utterly impossible to stand still.”

Dr. Glueck further observed, “What will our future be, if this school for serving God and Israel is not strengthened and built up in every possible way? If we American Jews cannot be conscious of, live up to, and spread the teachings of our religion, and have properly trained rabbis to teach and interpret it, then all our charity will be to no avail.”

We who have inherited the mantle of our teacher Dr. Glueck recognize that no Jewish community in history has ever flour-

President's Message

ished without a great intellectual center to educate students – not only rabbis, but cantors, graduate students, communal professionals, and

educators as well – who serve as the intermediaries between the past and the present, and who create the future of our people worldwide through their learning and their deeds. We who cherish the legacy Dr. Glueck bequeathed us recognize that we must meet the demands of our day with no less resolve and compassion, insight and judgment than he did. These pages report on some of the myriad ways in which our HUC-JIR community today seeks to follow the model of scholarship and practical action he established. The life and thought of Nelson Glueck remind us that however difficult the challenges are that confront us, we must not simply “yearn and tarry.” We must act to meet the challenges before the College-Institute in the present as he did in the past. This is no easy task, and it requires persons of courage and vision to carry out the task.



Rabbi David Ellenson and his wife, Rabbi Jacqueline Koch Ellenson, N '83, Director of the Women's Rabbinic Network and Chair of the Hadassah Foundation.

Lewis Barth is clearly such a person, and I would like to express my special thanks and gratitude to Lewis as he completes his term of service as Dean of our Los Angeles campus. I am delighted that this issue of *The Chronicle* contains a well-deserved feature about him. I have known Lewis for twenty-seven years and he is a dear friend with whom I have worked in a variety of ways – first as a colleague, then under his guidance as Dean, and now as his part-

ner in the leadership and administration of the College-Institute. HUC-JIR has been enriched immeasurably by his warmth and concern, and his integrity and commitment to excellence has played a central role in the quality of education we have been able to provide our students. The integrity and grace that mark him as well as the learning he bears so effortlessly have earned him the love and respect of all. The manner in which he has conducted himself as Dean has served as a model for me as I have attempted to exercise leadership as President. Our College-Institute has been blessed that Lewis Barth has devoted his being to our mission, and HUC-JIR must continue to educate individuals who embody the values and character that persons such as Nelson Glueck and Lewis Barth represent. With your help, I am confident we will.

Rabbi David Ellenson
June 2006

IS PEACE STILL POSSIBLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST?

Ambassador Dennis Ross, Former U.S. Envoy to the Middle East



Hamas is an acronym for words that literally mean Islamic Resistance Movement. Hamas built itself on two pillars: the *doawa* [economic and social infrastructure] and *jihad* [holy war]. They elevate as a principle the concept of resistance; they reject Israel's right to exist.

It is no surprise that when you had a bombing in Tel Aviv the week before last, every Hamas official said that blowing up a Tel Aviv falafel stand was an act of self-defense. When you have a government that legitimizes this kind of behavior, there is not a whole lot you can do.

But, I would suggest to you that we face a series of ironies at this time. And within these ironies there may be some things that can be done. The first irony is that we have

Excerpts from Ambassador Ross's lecture in the Petrie Synagogue on May 2, 2006 at HUC-JIR/New York.

an extraordinary dissonance right now: two elections by the Israelis and Palestinians that are momentous, but moving in completely opposite directions....

The election in Israel produced and reflected a consensus...Olmert did something that Israeli Prime Ministers don't do. He ran on a platform and he spelled out what he was going to do. I know this seems surprising. Let me put it in some perspective in Israel just to show you.

When Yitzhak Rabin ran for office, he said he wouldn't deal with the PLO. We had Oslo as a result. Benjamin Netanyahu ran against Oslo and did the Hebron and Wye River Agreements, which followed the Oslo

Agreement, which I largely did. Ehud Barak ran and said he would not divide Jerusalem. And yet, what we put on the table would have divided Jerusalem, and he accepted it. And Ariel Sharon, when he ran, said, "No unilateral settlement pull-outs." And, he said early on, not only was he against it, but there was a point at which he said that Netzarim was just as important to the future of Israel as Tel Aviv. And then he carried out the withdrawal from Gaza.

Now, Ehud Olmert runs and he says, "We're actually going to separate from the Palestinians. We'll negotiate if we can. But, if we can't, we are going to shape our own future. We are not going to allow either Palestinian dysfunction or Palestinian rejection to

determine our future. Our future has to be that of a Jewish democratic state. We can't stay in most of the West Bank."

This is what Olmert put out there. He did not disguise it. And he intends to do it.

That he won reflects a consensus in Israel that the Israeli public wants out of Palestinian lives. They want to end occupation. What the Palestinians will do on their side of the security barrier is up to them, but Israel wants to be done with the Palestinians. The Israelis want a divorce. And what does Hamas want? It wants the eradication of Israel.

The second irony: Hamas wants nothing to do with Israel, but it is completely dependent on Israel. Who provides almost all of the electricity and water for Palestinians? That would be Israel. Who is the number one trading partner for the Palestinians? By far, that would be Israel. Eighty percent of the Palestinian economy is dependent on Israel....

The third irony: Hamas needs calm even more than the Israelis. They promised before the election and after the election that they would end corruption. They would end lawlessness. They would provide a new industrial policy, a new health policy, a new agricultural policy, a new economic policy.

They can't deliver on any of those promises if they are at war with Israel. That's a fact.

The problem is that they want calm on the cheap. They want to be able to say, "We will in fact continue not to attack Israel. But, we won't stop Islamic Jihad from attacking Israel. And we won't stop the popular resistance committees from attacking Israel. And we won't stop the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade from attacking Israel." The problem with that kind of approach to calm is that they won't have calm because Israel won't sit back and wait to be hit....

The Israelis are not going to talk to Hamas directly. And Hamas does not want to talk to the Israelis directly. In fact, I was on Al Jazeera right after Hamas leader Mahmoud Zahar... and, he was asked the question – "Will you talk to the Israelis?" And, he said, "There's no need...."

If Hamas, in fact, wants calm, they want certain things from the Israelis at the same time.

They don't want the Israelis to carry out targeted killings. They don't want the Israelis to carry out incursions. They don't want the Israelis to be making arrests. The Israelis might well be prepared to stop all of those if Hamas would be prepared to stop Islamic Jihad, the popular resistance committees, and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade from carrying out attacks.

Hamas has to be prepared to give up resistance as a principle. And, don't assume that is so easy. I was meeting with a group of Palestinians in Gaza last July, the day after the bombing in Netanya, and I asked the person who was leading the group:

"Look, there is something I don't get: Hamas has a strategic interest in having elections because if they have elections, they are going to do well. And, if they do well, their positions will be transformed. They are going to be legitimized in a completely different way within the Palestinian territories and maybe outside. And they are going to become the central power broker.

So, it is a strategic interest for them to have elections. But if they allow bombs to continue in Israel, there will be no elections. Islamic Jihad is minute compared to Hamas. So why doesn't Hamas stop Islamic Jihad from bombing, given their strategic objective?"

Now, the person I was talking to said, "You know, it's very funny that you raise that question because yesterday Mahmoud Zahar and I were talking. And, his answer [to the same question] was, "Well, it's resistance. We can't stop resistance."

Now, it is one thing to say you can't stop resistance when you are in opposition. It is something else to say you can't stop resistance when you are the government....

Now, one last irony. If you think about it, our strategic objective at this point should be based on the following premise: we want Hamas to change or we want them to fail. The irony is if they fail, we want them to be seen as responsible for their failure. Not us. How are we going to do that?

If we cut off the Palestinian public as well as cut off Hamas, the Palestinian people are

(continued on next page)

Ambassador Dennis Ross, Director of The Washington Institute for Near East Policy and former U.S. Envoy to the Middle East, has



for the past two decades played the leading role in shaping U.S. involvement in peace-making in the region. As the architect of the peace process throughout the George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton administrations, he was instrumental in assisting the Israelis and Palestinians in reaching the 1995 Interim Agreement, and he successfully brokered the Hebron Accord in 1997. Ross facilitated the Israeli-Jordan peace treaty and intensively worked to bring Israel and Syria together.

Count Folke Bernadotte was



Vice President of the Swedish Red Cross during World War II and diplomat to the United Nations. As supervisor of the exchange of disabled British and German war prisoners, he saved countless Jewish lives, transporting surviving victims of the Shoah to a safe haven in Sweden. During the Arab-Israeli War of Independence in 1948, Bernadotte was chosen by the United Nations Security Council to seek and negotiate a peace treaty, ending the war. Bernadotte was recognized posthumously for his heroism on behalf of the Jewish people with the Dr. Bernard Heller Prize of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in 1998.

This lecture was made possible by the generosity of the Bernadotte Family, Stefan Lersten, and the Dr. Bernard Heller Foundation and its trustees – Ruth O. Freedlander, Beatrice Weidman, and Carole L. Weidman, Esq.

DENNIS ROSS

International Count Folke Bernadotte Memorial Lecture (continued)

going to blame their failure on us. So, does that mean we should not cut off Hamas? Should we deal with them even though they have not changed? Should we find ways of getting assistance there even though Hamas might be the recipients of it?

My answer is that we cut them off. And we work very hard to ensure that the rest of the world cuts them off. Why? Because the one thing we do not want to see happen is for them to begin to have their ideology legitimated internationally.

They say, “We’ll accept a *hudna* – a truce.” I watched senior Hamas member Musa Abu Marzuk on Al Jazeera once when he was asked, “What’s a *hudna*?” “Oh,” he said, “a *hudna* is what existed from 1948 to 1967.” That’s a pretty strange definition of a truce.

If you allow Hamas to be in a position where it gets to continue to believe what it believes, it does not have to change. It gets recognition. It gets assistance. Then, you put yourself in a position where basically what they say becomes part of the normal discourse internationally.

Think about what that means at the same time that you have a president of Iran who on a very regular basis acts to delegitimize Israel’s very existence. We worked very hard to establish a consensus around a two-state solution. And now, you are going to create a discourse where the existence of Israel is something that is legitimate to question?...

So, how do I square the circle? Cut off Hamas. No assistance to Hamas. But, at the same time, don’t cut off the Palestinian public....

We won’t succeed in keeping the rest of the world with us in cutting off and isolating Hamas if you suddenly see a disaster economically for the Palestinian people. If unemployment becomes rampant and is over 50 or 60 percent, if there are real economic hardships as a result, if you see real suffering as a result, we will lose the rest of the world.

So, what do we do? How do we manage the need to maintain ties to the Palestinians on the one hand and at the same time keep Hamas cut off?

I would suggest three things that can be done. First, redefine what you mean by humanitarian assistance to include support for health and education.

projects related to job creation or infrastructure development. Have them lay out each project with a proposal and a structure within the President’s office for implementation....

The third way is to create new non-governmental organizations. There are already 4,200 NGOs in the Palestinian territories. But for the most part, they are very small and not particularly effective. We need to create new NGOs and have them focus on becoming the equivalent of what Hamas was good at: creating a *doawa* – an economic and social infrastructure.

Let’s create a secular *doawa*. Let’s create a steering committee internationally, to identify the right kinds of NGOs to implement projects – whether it’s infrastructure, housing, health, or education, and help to fund them. Hamas before the elections funded 30 private schools in Gaza. And, you know what they taught in those schools? They taught young people how to become martyrs. Let’s help fund at least 30 private secular schools in Gaza.

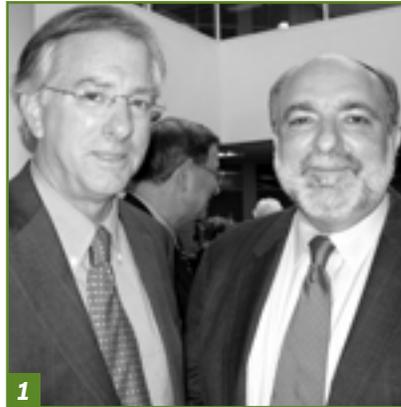
This is a way to begin to create an alternative to Hamas. It is a way to demonstrate to the Palestinian people that we are still connected

to them. It is a way to demonstrate that unless Hamas changes, Hamas doesn’t deliver anything.

When the Palestinian Authority did not deliver anything, Hamas was delivering. We have an interest in seeing Hamas change. We have an interest in seeing Hamas adjust. But we have an interest in having Hamas

adjust to the world. We do not have an interest in having the world adjust to Hamas.

We should be governed by a principle: any Palestinian who is prepared to accept co-existence with Israel and rejects violence as a means for pursuing Palestinian aspirations is a Palestinian with whom we will work. ■



1. Ambassador Dennis Ross (left) and Rabbi Ellenson.

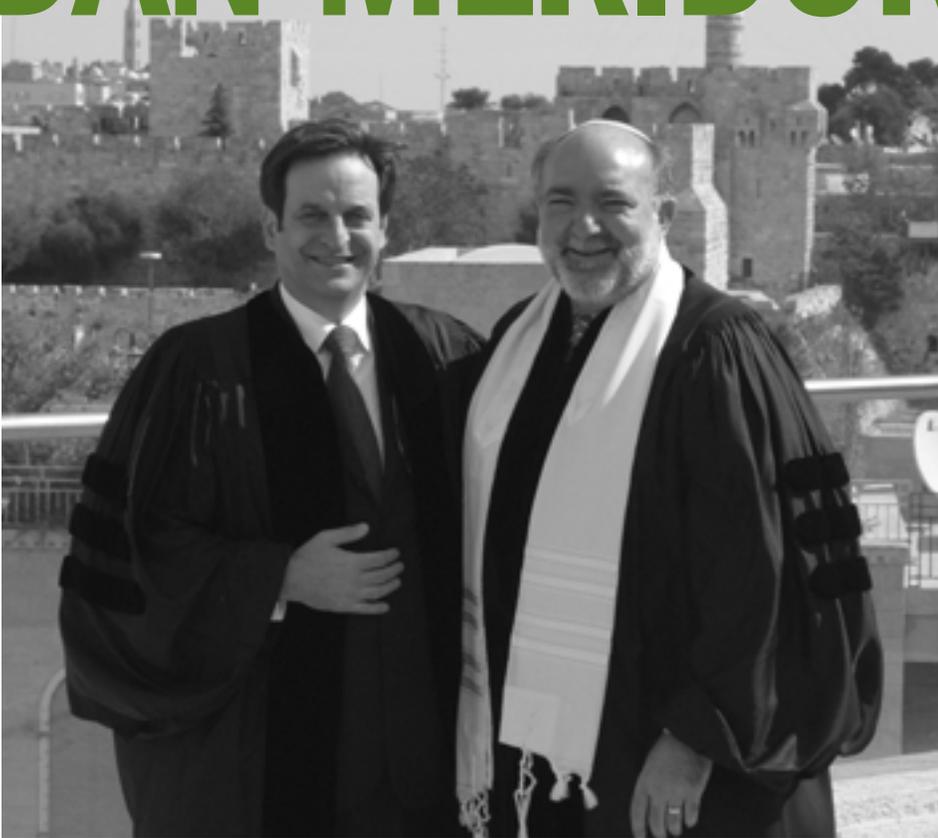
2. Ruth O. Freedlander, Trustee of the Dr. Bernard Heller Foundation, and Stefan Lersten, close friend of the Bernadotte family.

3. Dr. Alfred Gottschalk, Chancellor Emeritus (left), with Ambassador and Mrs. Anders Liden, Sweden’s Ambassador to the United Nations.

You can use U.N. agencies for that because they already have an existing infrastructure that doesn’t require you to deal with Hamas.

Second, Abu Mazen, the Palestinian President, is still there. Now, you don’t automatically give money to the Office of the Presidency. You ask Abu Mazen to create

DAN MERIDOR



The honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters was presented to Dan Meridor (left), long-time member of the Knesset, former Minister of Justice and Minister of Finance, and currently Chairperson of the Jerusalem Fund. Meridor advanced human rights in Israel and paved the way for Israel's 'constitutional revolution,' whereby the Supreme Court was empowered to apply judicial review to laws passed by the Knesset. He initiated important structural reforms in the economy and promoted Israel's long-term national security and the parliamentary regulation of its foreign policy. His love for Jerusalem and the Jewish people, both in Israel and the Diaspora, have made him a spokesman for this cultural and pluralistic city.

I would like to begin by thanking you for this honor. I also want to thank you because on such a beautiful day you allowed me to come to the most beautiful place on earth – Jerusalem – where we stand facing its walls, enjoying together the words of Jewish wisdom pronounced by your graduates. I am truly humbled by your kindness.

Today we commemorate ten years after the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. This was a terrible and saddening event in our history, a dreadful disgrace that will remain in our

memories forever, a disgrace even greater than the political assassination that took place here 2,581 years ago, when Ismael Ben Netania murdered Gdalyahu Ben Ahikam. Why even more? Because 2,581 years ago it was the murder of a ruler appointed by the king of Babylon; in the case of Rabin, however, it was a Jew, a citizen of the State of Israel, who murdered a Prime Minister that had been democratically elected by the people. And even worse is that the murderer was not disturbed or insane. He was a sane, evil person. He justified his deed and considered himself acting in his

right to kill by his interpretation of *din rodef*, the religious license to kill a fellow Jew in order to save the many from the one; and he committed the murder deliberately. He said: “The justification is religious. This Prime Minister has violated a religious command and I was commanded to stop him.”

It is for this reason that I decided today to talk about the conflict between religion and democracy, which we find so difficult to talk about. But this is the sad truth that this scoundrel has forced us to face.

Even before Rabin's assassination, immediately after the signing of the Oslo Agreement, we heard similar arguments. Not a legitimate claim, which I also made, to the effect that the Agreement is not good, that it is damaging, that the parties to it are committing a harmful act by executing it; but rather a completely different claim. The Agreement is not legitimate. Why? Because it commands us to commit acts that are contrary to religious precepts. It surrenders parts of the land of Israel to outsiders, and this is a contravention of a Godly commandment. We all remember the demonstrations of “This Is Our Land;” this was their motto.

Just recently, during the difficult moments we experienced with the disengagement, some people sang the same tune: the disengagement is forbidden by religion. We heard leaders, rabbis who called for not going through with the disengagement; we even heard them call for policemen and soldiers not to follow orders because they violated a mandate from God. The allegation was that “the government and the Knesset (that represent the majority of the people of Israel) do not have the power to make decisions about Israel's boundaries, give up lands, divide it into parts.” At the end of the day, we felt relieved when it became apparent that only a few abided by these religious commands. The decision was reached, the law of the Knesset was honored, the disengagement took place, and the voice of the majority was heard.

(continued on next page)

The explanation by the government was the same explanation voiced by many others. The justification was that “the majority decided; honor the decision of the majority; do not place religious commandments against the decision of the majority.” We should delve deeper into this claim and say something important about it. Because, in my opinion, this is not the end of the story; it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning. The ordeals are still before us.

We are talking about the essence of democracy. The rule of the majority is a fundamental milestone of democracy. The majority has the power to decide. This is what Exodus calls “follow the majority.” But are we, the Jews, really willing to say that the law must always be honored? What about the laws of the evil in the countries of the world? A law that discriminates, a law that steals, a law that does wrong? Is the law truly above all? Isn't there a system of values above the laws, to which laws subject themselves? This was the ruling of the Nuremberg Trials: the law is not above all, there is something above the law. There are values higher than the law; a law that denies those values, that acts against them, is worthless. There is no doubt that the decision of the majority is an essential condition for democracy, but it is not a condition that is sufficient for democracy. Another condition, as essential, is human rights.

The liberal approach that guides our nation maintains that “the state was created for the individual, not the individual for the state.” Rights are not bestowed upon the individual by the state; the individual inherited them by virtue of creation. On the contrary: by coming together to form a society where they will develop, individuals are willing to relinquish some of their rights by saying to the majority “you can decide for us; not about everything, but about some things.”

There is no doubt that if a law were passed by the Knesset tomorrow that I am not allowed to eat *kosher* food, that law should not be honored. A law that dictates that I cannot put on *tefillin* is a law that should not be honored. We did not empower the majority to make such decisions.

In many countries of the democratic world, there is usually a consensus: the Constitution is above the law. Thirteen years ago, here in Israel, we were fortunate to enact what we called the “constitutional revolution” and determined that the law is not above all. This tension between what the majority is allowed to do and what it is not empowered to do is what defines democracy. Not everything is in the hands of the majority. We should say: religious matters usually affect the individual; the majority does not have the power to force religious

For democracy to protect us, we must protect democracy.

precepts upon the individual or to violate religious commands. This is usually customary in the democratic world.

In a democracy, the majority can decide on matters such as national borders, the land, war, and peace. These are not matters for religion. The majority cannot decide whether I will adhere to religious precepts in the way I eat, in the way I relate to other people, in the way I pray. If there is someone who says that in matters of war, peace, and national borders, religion is above the precepts of the majority, that person takes us from democracy to theocracy, from a liberal regime to pure fundamentalism.

This is a very important distinction that must be taught. It is not mandatory that there be a conflict between religion and democracy in these matters. It all depends on religious interpretation. A believer who thinks that, according to religion, matters of war, peace and national borders are decided by the majority, should not be conflicted. Only those who believe that, according to religion, the majority does not have the right to decide, but it is rather the rabbis who should decide, are in conflict with democracy. Democracy should not yield in this matter. It should not be nice or agreeable. It must stand firm.

We must now defend democracy more than ever before. For decades there was no controversy about these fundamental concepts. The power of the Knesset was clear. People did not scream “there is no Jewish majority” or “we need a referendum.” The Knesset decided and we accepted. Then, suddenly, a question arose: “Where does the power come from?” For many years the Supreme Court decided and its rulings were honored. When it ruled that Ben Gurion should not decide about security matters on his own, and the Supreme Court and the people said “we shall determine the balance between security and human rights,” Ben Gurion lowered his head and accepted. When the Supreme Court ordered Menachem Begin to evacuate Elon Moreh, his precious settlement, he submitted and accepted.

Something has changed in Israeli society. Many of us thought that democracy was guaranteed, that it is not necessary to protect it, that it will sort itself out. No longer. If we want a free, democratic state that upholds equality between its citizens, we cannot trust that things will sort themselves out. It is a struggle. For democracy to protect us, we must protect democracy. ■

THE SECOND PHASE OF REFORM JEWISH PIETY

Dr. Eugene B. Borowitz,
Distinguished University Professor;
Sigmund Falk Distinguished
Professor of Education and
Jewish Religious Thought,
HUC-JIR/New York

Shehechyanu and thank you, Estelle. Without you, I would not be standing here this evening. I am also deeply grateful to Eric Yoffie, and to all the URJ lay and staff colleagues for granting me this exceptional honor, and particularly to Lennard Thal for allowing his great heart to fill out his account of who I am and what I have done. And a final word of thanks to my spiritual brother, Arnold Jacob Wolf, for 63 years of being my private prophet.

Presenting this award to a rabbi surely seeks to honor

in one person the many Jews, both lay and clergy, who have in their own ways taken our faith seriously and have now brought us to the second phase of Reform Jewish piety. The notion of pious Reform Jews will strike some people as incongruous. If, however, piety means taking your religion to heart and, in our case, trying in your own way to live by its teachings, then there have long been significant numbers of pious Reform Jews.

We can perhaps best understand the first phase of our religiosity by extrapolating

from the great American ritual we have recently practiced – voting. The election officials didn't care that the person before you believed fervently in UFOs or that the one behind you was the High Priestess of the local Druid coven – and they didn't care that you were a Jew. As long as you were a citizen, hadn't committed a felony, and were registered in this district, you could help decide who would govern.

Any Jew sensitive to the 1500-year history of the Jews as pariahs in the Western world will find that simple act uplifting. To be free of discrimination, to be just another person, is to feel in

your soul the maturation of human goodness and to know that by your ethical behavior you and other Jews can validate your North American emancipation. The first phase of Reform Jewish piety was dedicated to these high human goals and considered them a modern restatement of the universal aspects of Judaism's ancient teaching.

You can still find exemplars of this old Reform Jewish piety in our congregations, not the least by their complaints about the changes which have taken place in their temples. If not, try

(continued on next page)

Dr. Eugene B. Borowitz presented this Address at The 2005 Union for Reform Judaism Biennial Convention upon receiving the Eisendrath Bearer of Light Award.

THE SECOND PHASE OF REFORM JEWISH PIETY

screening the movie “Driving Miss Daisy.” Culture-bound as it was, there is no mistaking her ethical dedication and personal rectitude. No wonder, for real, her temple in Atlanta was bombed by militant segregationists. They may have been terribly wrong about what America stood for but they certainly understood Miss Daisy and her ilk’s ethical religiosity.

Hindsight makes clear the defects of their creative spirituality. If all that really mattered is ethics, why bother about religion? If every thoughtful person has similar human goals, why care about being Jewish? And if North American democracy is our sure guide to human flourishing, Zionism is a sin and all the distinguishing signs of Jewishness, like Hebrew, or chant, or body language, should be stripped from our worship.

What primarily doomed the older Reform piety was its optimism. The 20th century brutally forced us to confront the human genius for doing evil. Nothing made that clearer than the Holocaust. The “God” we lost in that horror was not *Adonai*. We had long been too agnostic for that belief. The “god” who died for us was the one we had truly trusted in: humanity’s rationality and ethical competence.

Intellect confirmed the new realism by burying the notion of universal human thought under a barrage of criticism. Anthropologists tied thinking to one’s culture, psychologists anchored it in our childhood,

and people of color denounced the idea as another instance of colonialist arrogance. But universalism’s doom was sealed by feminism’s insistence that universalism was another stratagem for male dominance, and the demand that gender now be fundamental to any discussion of humanity.

Something like this dizzying passage from the modern to the postmodern turned the old Reform piety upside down. Instead of believing we



Rabbi Lennard Thal, Senior Vice President of the URJ, congratulating Dr. Borowitz.

are a community of universalists who retain some old Jewish roots, we now see ourselves in particular terms, that is, as North American Jews whose ancient traditions and recent emancipation engender in us a uniquely intense dedication to the messianic unification of humankind.

One sees this transition most vividly at our services. Though the patterns vary widely, our prayers now have lots of Hebrew but almost no singing

of English hymns. Our music tends to the participatory and is almost always more concerned with what the congregation will feel than what they will find impressive. A good number of us now wear *kipot*, or *tallitot*, or express ourselves in body language. The sermon, once the highlight of the service, is now often a relatively brief *d’var torah*, the exegesis of a Jewish text, rather than a response to an issue agitating contemporary North American culture or politics.

You also find this in our theology. Our hard gained humility about human competence has opened us up to spirituality, or, less timidly, to a place for God in our lives. We talk about that not in the accents of rationality but rather by reference to experience or relationship or even mysticism. That is accompanied by a fresh appreciation of what the classic texts of Judaism can teach us when they are read through the

lenses of our emancipation.

Seeing all this, the North American Jewish press is apt to gloat that we are becoming more Orthodox. What a senseless charge that is! Ours is the Movement that, far too slowly we must admit, pioneered the Jewish ordination of women and the continuing growth of the number of women in positions of leadership and influence. Ours is the Movement that insists that the child of a Jewish father, brought up with Jewish study and celebration, must be considered the equal of a child born to a Jewish mother. And ours is the Movement that has sought to welcome gay and lesbian Jews to our congregations and fought for their civil rights to marry.

I should like to see the day when, for a change, the Jewish press will focus on how much of Reform experimentation has later been co-opted by the community as a whole. Let me give three examples.

Recently a respected scholar of North American Jewish sociology wrote a penetrating article about how the small birthrate of modernized Jews posed a threat to our continuity. Though a leading official of a Movement dedicated to a modern reading of Jewish law, he strangely did not then call on his readers to fulfill their expanded post-Holocaust Jewish legal duty to procreate. His omission surely came from his recognition that, with all due respect, they would almost certainly evaluate his proposal in terms of

what they personally believed to be their Jewish duty. Ideology aside, all such people are closet Reform Jews.

Something similar occurs among those who seek to take *kabbalah* seriously. Alas, our classic mystic movement is arguably the most sexist theology in all of Jewish thought. It identifies the feminine with the harsh aspects of God's *sefirot* as well as with all that is dark and dangerous in human existence. But none of those seeking to win converts to a contemporary Jewish mysticism would be given a hearing if they did not espouse the full equality of women. Surely theirs is a Reform *kabbalah*.

In the 1780s Moses Mendelssohn produced an elegant German translation of the Torah, almost certainly because he believed that mastery of the vernacular was necessary if Jews were to participate in German society. For the same reason, the leaders of the traditional Jewish community bitterly opposed the translation. Some decades later, when Reform Judaism came into being, it enthusiastically utilized the vernacular so modern Jews would fully understand their religious practice. Today, the greatest North American Jewish publisher, whose right wing Orthodox credentials are impeccable, is extraordinarily successful precisely because it accompanies its classic Jewish texts with English translations and commentaries. I cannot help but see this as another silent co-optation of a practice identified with Reform Judaism.



Robert Heller, Chairman of the URJ Board of Trustees, and Dr. Borowitz.

Flattered by what others have borrowed from us, we can with some confidence embrace this second phase of Reform Jewish piety. But even as a prior generation overdid its universalism we may well take our new particularity too far. Thus, it is a satisfying fulfillment of our tradition to increase the amount of Hebrew in our services but not when it goes so far that it robs us of our understanding of what our prayers mean. It is positively redemptive to unleash our depth of feeling as we sing together the new romantic music of the synagogue, but not when feeling so good leads us to forget that we have come together not merely to bask in a sing-along but to reach out to God and renew our community's Covenant with God.

Our greatest challenge, however, is that in our new-found enthusiasm for our Jewishness we shall slacken our dedication to mending the world. Neither the State of Israel, nor the Holocaust, nor our focus on our folk particularity can function as the master narra-

tive of contemporary Jewish existence. Rather, I believe that, in an awesome recapitulation of the Exodus, what still most seismically moves us is our emancipation. After a millennium and a half of denigration and segregation, *Adonai*, our God brought us out of the West European ghettos and the East European *shtetls* and the North African *mellahs*, and made us equals in the Western world. And in this liberation, government was the enabling agent of God's mighty hand and outstretched arm. And because our family forebears were not too long ago a despised and oppressed community, we know the heart of all those minorities who are today's pariahs. It was governments and their far-seeing, morally concerned leaders, not market forces or individual philanthropists, who were principally responsible for giving us the political and economic rights in which we now glory.

When, therefore, we see governments discriminate against

one minority or another, we feel our own sense of security challenged, and our own bitter history demands we protest. Then and every day, conscience and experience combine to powerfully command us to make government more moral. Of course thoughtful citizens will disagree about which particular governmental plan will create the greater human good and none of us, Judaism says, has infallibility.

Nonetheless, few Jewish ethical lessons can be clearer than that the community as such has a primary obligation to care for "the widow, the orphan, and the stranger," that is, all the powerless among us. Yes, let us do all we can as individuals and as groups organized to increase the common welfare but let us not forget that for all that private activity can do, governmental action has incomparably greater sway. That is why, to the consternation of political experts, Jews in election after election, still disproportionately do not vote their pocketbooks but continually seek the greater communal good. Any embrace of Jewishness that does not enshrine the recognition that our emancipation radically enlarged our horizon of Jewish religious duty is unworthy of our allegiance. But all those pious Reform Jews who know that Torah today demands not only deep Jewish roots but unending dedication to repairing our shattered world are worthy of God's richest blessing. May God bless us all. ■

BIO-ETHICS * ORGAN DONA

When the Reform Movement emerged in 19th century Germany, inspired by the *haskalah* – Jewish enlightenment and emancipation, it sought to liberate the modern Jew from the perceived restrictions of Jewish ritual, and emphasized instead the autonomy of the individual to choose one’s path to a relationship with God. The myriad *halakhot* – Jewish laws dictating the minutia of Orthodox Jewish life – were no longer viewed as normative, and many laws were abandoned altogether in favor of self-determination.

Today, nearly 200 years after the dedication of the Hamburg Temple marking the begin-

ning of Reform Judaism, HUC-JIR is buzzing with *halakhic* discourse – scholarship based in the very legal system once cast off. Perhaps more than ever before, leading Reform scholars, largely luminaries of the HUC-JIR faculty, are working in the arena of applied *halakhah*, where the collective body of Jewish religious law, including the 613 biblical *mitzvot*, rabbinic law, and customs and traditions, is employed as source material to answer questions of how to lead a Jewish life. Their research has produced a flood of responsa – directive, legally-based answers to religious questions, as well as books and essays analyzing, adapting, or re-

claiming rabbinic law for a liberal ethic.

Some of these works aim to guide contemporary Jewish practice; others simply represent a fascination with the intellectual framework of the *halakhic* process.

Halakhah in Reform?

May non-Jews participate in the writing of a Torah scroll?

May a Jew participate in organ donation?

Answering difficult questions such as these is the task of the ten-person Responsa Committee, an arm of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, chaired by Dr. Mark Washofsky, Professor of Rabbinics at HUC-JIR/Cincinnati. The committee, which this year

maintains, however, that the role of the classical Jewish legal system in Reform is much larger than is commonly understood. In fact, the CCAR’s volumes, *Gates of Mitzvah* and *Gates of Observance*, as well as Washofsky’s own popular book, *Jewish Living: A Guide to Contemporary Reform Practice* (2000), are the descendants of a long tradition of Reform rabbis grappling with and contributing to the literature of Jewish law.

HUC-JIR President David Ellenson points out in his article, “Halakhah for Liberal Jews” (*Reconstructionist*, March 1988), that “Franz Rosenzweig decreed that all Jewish traditions ought to be the object of study and reflection for the committed liberal Jew. All of Jewish teaching – Bible, *midrash*, poetry, liturgy, rabbinic commentary, philosophy, *kabbalah*, and, yes, *halakhah* – thus becomes potential Torah, put into force via one’s own choice.”

Washofsky suggests that *halakhah* is the fulcrum in a balanced scale of the Reform Movement, where two value systems have existed side-by-side since its inception. “The first, based on the principles of rationalism, enlightenment, modernism, and autonomy, leads individuals to the assumption that there is no such thing as law in Reform Judaism; the second, traditionalism, draws Jews continually back toward their roots, and these are based in Jewish law.”

Dr. Rachel Adler, Professor of Modern Jewish Thought at HUC-JIR/Los Angeles, agrees that there “could not be a Judaism that did not have some kind of *halakhah* – a system of living to express the content of Reform Judaism.” She posits that “a Reform Jew inhabits a universe of Jewish meaning that isn’t simply a question of what laws you do or don’t obey; it’s a kind of vision of what a good Jew is, of what your relationships are with other people and with the universe.” For Dr. Adler, whose work, *Engendering Judaism* (1998), won the National Jewish Book Award in Religious Thought in 1999,

THE LAWS OF CHANGE

Jewish Legal Literature at HUC-JIR and in Reform Scholarship Today

Leah Kaplan

celebrates its centennial, was founded in 1906 by Kaufmann Kohler and empowered in the 1950s by its most prolific writer, Solomon Freehoff. It has been extremely active in recent years, giving broadly-researched answers to questions on all facets of Jewish life.

That these questions are being asked, and that the answers given are grounded in Rabbinic law may surprise some Reform Jews long schooled in the language of autonomy, for whom the concept of a binding, or even guiding legal code is incongruous. Many even claim that there is no such thing as *halakhah* in Reform Judaism. Washofsky

ECONOMIC JUSTICE * HUMANA

TION * GENETIC ENGINEERING

halakhah should be a fluid, changeable set of obligations to live out that embody our stories, norms, and values, even as they evolve over time. “This is the beauty of the word *halakhah*, which means ‘walking,’” says Rabbi Richard Levy, Director of the School of Rabbinical Studies at HUC-JIR/Los Angeles. “It is a guide that shows people who want to be in dialogue with Torah how and where they might go.”

Theirs and other *halakhic* research is empowered by the same vision of autonomy that compelled Samuel Holdheim, a leader of 19th-century German Reform Judaism, to write that “the Talmud speaks with the ideology of its own time, and for that time it was right. *I speak from the higher ideology of my time, and for this age I am right.*” While contemporary Reform Jews would reject Holdheim’s notion of “progressive revelation,” his emphasis on individual autonomy and social contexts as decisive factors in Reform Jewish decision-making remain central to rabbinic literature produced at HUC-JIR and by its faculty today.

Contemporary Reform *halakhists* possess a deep consciousness of where and when we live, and who we are as Jews and citizens of the world. Washofsky insists that this was true throughout Jewish history: “the fact that we live where and when we do has a great deal to do with the answers we arrive at. But we believe you can prove that of every Jew who ever lived, including those who wrote the Talmud. We have what we believe is a very good perspective, but it’s ours,” he says. “Others will and have come up with a different answer. But we’re O.K. with that.”

Historically, notes Rabbi Ellenson, *halakhah* was a guiding force at the birth of the Reform Movement. In 1819, when the Hamburg Temple Prayerbook was published, Orthodox criticism of the new liturgy poured in. In response, M.J. Bresslau, one of the book’s editors, drafted a thorough

responsum citing multiple rabbinic sources. His and fellow reformer David Caro’s defense for the new prayerbook was penned in the language of the legal and liturgical tradition that they proposed to evolve. In his volume, *Prayerbook Reform in Europe* (1968), Reform scholar Jakob Petuchowski writes, “the Judaism to which they wanted to bring reform was a Judaism based on Bible, Talmud and Codes; and it was by an appeal to these accepted bases of Jewish life that they sought to justify their place *within* Judaism.”

This, according to Ellenson, was the framework that spurred renewed interest in



This is the beauty of the word *halakhah*, which means ‘walking.’ It is a guide that shows people who want to be in dialogue with Torah how and where they might go.



American Reform Judaism in the beginning of the 20th century. Architects of American Reform such as Jacob Lauterbach and Samuel Cohon immigrated to the United States from Europe and came to teach at Hebrew Union College, where their interest in *halakhah* was pronounced and their writings on Jewish law were voluminous. Also eminent among these scholars was Rabbi Solomon Freehoff, who first taught at HUC and then moved to serve congregational pulpits. Situated for most of his career at Rodef Shalom Congregation in Pittsburgh, Freehoff became one of the most prolific

authors and students of responsa of the 20th century, and his vast library of responsa literature, the Solomon B. Freehof Responsa Collection, is housed in the Lester Jaffe Room of the HUC-JIR/ Cincinnati Klau Library. His legacy as an artisan of liberal *halakhic* discourse is the CCAR Responsa Committee and the Freehof Institute for Progressive Halakhah. The latter, conceived of by his successor at Rodef Shalom Congregation, Rabbi Walter Jacob, with HUC-JIR Professor Rabbi Moshe Zemer in 1988, is a *halakhic* think-tank, publishing scores of responsa read by rabbis and other Jews worldwide. Defining the Reform relationship to *halakhah*, it was Freehoff who coined the term, “guidance, not governance.”

Advocates for Change

Halakhah then, is a fixture in Reform Judaism that has come to represent the values of change within the Movement. “No one,” writes David Ellenson, “has affirmed this approach to Reform with more integrity and tenacity than our colleague Rabbi Moshe Zemer of Tel Aviv.” Alongside his role as Senior Lecturer in Rabbinics at HUC-JIR Jerusalem, Zemer is also *Av Bet Din* of the Israel Council of Progressive Rabbis, and Director of the Freehof Institute. He is singularly considered Israel’s Reform *halakhic* authority, and was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters at HUC-JIR’s ordination in Jerusalem this past November.

Zemer is the author of *Evolving Halakhah* (Hebrew 1993; English 1999), a collection of his thirty-five-year career of scholarly work advocating a flexible approach to Jewish law. His numerous responsa reflect the ever-changing environment of the Jewish State in which he lives. As an advocate for liberal values, Zemer’s voice offers a distinct counterpoint to those among Israel’s religious right, and he employs classical legal texts to approach issues ranging from the personal to the polit-

(continued on next page)

N TRAFFICKING * TATTOOING

MIXED-FAITH HOUSEHOLDS *

ical; from the legal status of civil marriage in the state and the problem of the *aguna*, to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Zemer's work is based on the idea that change has always been possible, indeed, encouraged, among *poskim* – those who decide Jewish law, but that somewhere along the messoritic chain, Orthodox leaders began to cleave to an increasingly stringent path, negating the possibility for radical change. This theory is expressed by Walter Jacob in his 1982 essay, "The Source of Reform Halakhic Authority," where he says that the Orthodoxy of today "has overlooked the willingness and ability of the *Tannaim*, the *Amoraim*, the *Geonim*, the *Rishonim*, and the *Aharonim* to make changes. They always changed the outer forms in keeping with the inner spirit and adapted Judaism to radically different situations." According to Jacob, "Reform Judaism has followed this path, while traditional Judaism has lost its nerve."

Zemer envisions an evolving *halakhic* system that, in the words of David Ellenson, empowers a *posek* "to employ compassion, creativity, and logic, as well as his or her own moral intuitions, to extend the boundaries of *halakhah* to discover unique and unprecedented solutions to contemporary problems." In other words, a *halakhah* that embodies Reform ideology wholly and holistically.

While Zemer admonishes the Orthodox for being fearful of change, Rachel Adler critiques the liberal as reactionist. Rather than focusing on the "bandaids" that she says are applied by many modern halakhists to classical problems, she is interested in what she calls a "proactive *halakhah*," which seeks "not to preserve or adapt existing content, but to redefine what we mean by *halakhah* altogether."

Influenced by the ideas of American legal theorist Robert Cover, Adler envisions a

Judaism where laws are organically generated out of the *nomos*, or worldview of a given community. Thus, doing *mitzvot* is a way of acting out one's own and one's community's life vision for a better world. "The law is a bridge between reality and the other world of norms that we might imagine and attain," she says. In Adler's *nomos*, "as soon as you start to enlarge that vision you find yourself



Rabbi Moshe Zemer (center) receiving the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*, at the Ordination Ceremony in Jerusalem, November 4, 2005.

looking at a different moral universe."

In *Engendering Judaism* she presents a legal history of the marriage ceremony, pointing out that the keystone in a Jewish wedding is *kiddushin*, a contractual agreement, which is in the category of *kinyan*, based in Jewish property law. The result is the unilateral acquisition of a woman by a man. She mentions that one common progressive solution to this inequality is to equalize the acquisition: the bride and groom acquire each other.

Adler prefers instead to re-examine the legal structure of the wedding ceremony itself. Using classical *halakhic* sources, she argues that there is precedent for creating a legal bond between two individuals that is based on partnership rather than acquisition. Her *brit ahuvim*, a covenant between lovers, is intended as a *halakhically*-viable alternative to *kiddushin* that has the added benefit of not requiring a *get* in case of divorce, and being applicable to gay and lesbian couples as a bond of love and partnership.

Explaining her thought process, Adler says, "the second half of the traditional marriage ceremony describes a wedding as a covenant, and compares it to that between God and Israel. I started to think about what kind of legal structure would fit the kind of prophetic language that we have about marriage, and what kind would fit what men and women today expect a marriage to be."

Adler envisions *halakhah* developing at the grass roots level, and not merely amongst rabbis and scholars. "I would think that if people wanted to make *halakhot* about *Shabbat*, they would celebrate *Shabbat* together, study it classically, decide what their *Shabbat* ought to be, and then live it, tweak it, and develop a settled praxis about *Shabbat* based on a synergy between congregants and other congregations."

Call and Responsa

This collaborative approach to deciding *halakhah* is what drives the CCAR's Responsa Committee. As its Chairman, Mark Washofsky is the clearinghouse for questions on all topics of Jewish life asked by Reform Jews and rabbis around the United States. When drafting a responsum, he presents the committee with a carefully researched array of sources. In addition to the spectrum of Jewish *halakhic* literature on the topic, he says "we draw

MILITARY TORTURE * ANIMA

ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT

freely upon the work of academic historians, philosophers, legal theorists, and even Christian theologians, when the information they can provide is crucial to understanding the question at hand, and, for that matter, the way that we as modern people perceive our task.” A question on medical ethics will, for example, include the most up-to-date scientific and medical data. As important a tool as these texts are, Washofsky says that “ultimately, the task of writing responsa is to render a *rabbinical* decision. The non-Jewish sources do not determine the answer; rather, when they can help illuminate a problem or show a way to a better interpretation of our own sources, we are ready to accept their guidance.”

When asked how he approaches Jewish texts that seem incongruous with Reform theology or ethics, Washofsky says that “as liberal Jews, committed to intellectual openness and pluralism, we should be prepared to learn from any and all *halakhic* sources. This does *not* mean, however, that we read the sources uncritically. If a particular text conveys a message that violates our sense of justice and equity, we reserve the right not to learn from it or – better still – to understand its essential message in a way that coheres with our liberal values.”

Many of the questions brought before the committee are posed in search of a fresh approach to age-old problems. Washofsky explains that “those of us on the liberal end of the Jewish spectrum are willing to re-open questions that were decided centuries ago. We pay deference in that we study them carefully, but just because the argument was concluded then does not mean that it is concluded for us.”

Some of the most interesting questions posed to the committee of late have also been the most controversial. A genre of questions that Washofsky calls “boundary issues,” such as the role of the non-Jew in the ritual

life of the synagogue, issues of conversion, mixed-faith households, and relationships between Reform Jews and the greater Jewish community, require the committee to define what it means to be a Jewish or a Reform Jewish community.

The purpose of the Responsa Committee is to “offer our readers a way of talking about an issue, anchored in and influenced by the sources if not determined by them.” In this



The Talmud speaks with the ideology of its own time, and for that time it was right. I speak from the higher ideology of my time, and for this age I am right.



vein, a responsum on tattooing and body piercing, which is not a clear-cut issue in the traditional sources, was framed as a discussion of standards of holiness: “how should a Jew think about these matters and make decisions concerning them?”

The Ethics of Our Times

Halakhic literature is the source material for the work of the HUC-UC Center for the Study of Contemporary Moral Problems. A joint program of the College-Institute and University of Cincinnati, the Ethics Center’s mission is to advance teaching and research in ethics in the professional schools, to promote ethics education among professionals who are already in the field, and to develop

and support outreach programs that raise contemporary moral problems. The Center is led by the Israeli-born scholar, Dr. Jonathan Cohen, Rabbi Michael Matuson Professor at HUC-JIR/Cincinnati, who is also coordinator of the only M.A. and Ph.D. programs in the country that focus on Jewish law and ethics.

With a major focus in the field of bioethics, the Ethics Center co-founded the Academic Coalition for Jewish Bioethics, in collaboration with HUC-JIR’s Kalsman Institute on Judaism and Health in Los Angeles, the Center for Bioethics, University of Pennsylvania, the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, the University of Judaism, the Louis Finkelstein Institute for Religious and Social Studies, the Jewish Theological Seminary, and the Shalom Hartman Institute in Israel. The Coalition’s next conference, to be held September 10-11, 2006, will explore “In the Divine Message: Creation, Procreation, and the New Genetics.”

Cohen explains that the goal of the Ethics Center is to produce an open discourse among educators around contemporary issues, utilizing *halakhic* terms, categories, and values. In doing so, he believes that diversity is essential to developing an authentic ethical discussion. Thus, the Ethics Center’s members and the writings that it produces (which Cohen was careful to say are *not* responsa, as topics emerge out of discussion and not from outside questions on religious behavior) reflect a wide range of ethical and *halakhic* traditions, and approaches to reading and teaching texts. They address specific issues from different perspectives, both Jewish and non-Jewish. “The Jewish voice is clearly important, but it is not our sole focus,” he says.

In incorporating these many viewpoints, Cohen points out that it is critical “to have a solid methodological approach, including a clear set of guidelines for discussion of issues that

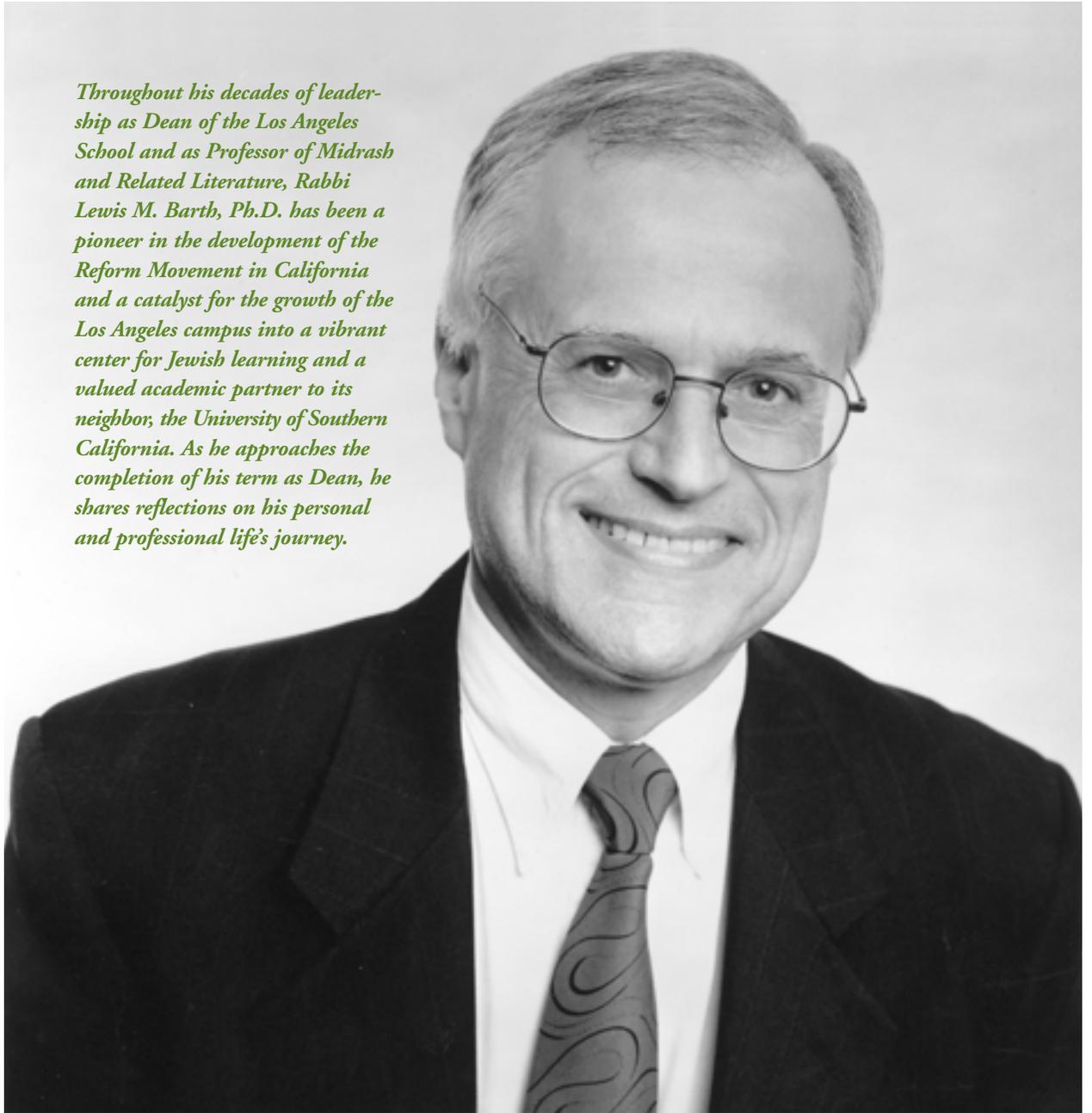
(continued on page 43)

L RIGHTS * GAY MARRIAGE

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF

CALIFORNIA DREAMING:

Throughout his decades of leadership as Dean of the Los Angeles School and as Professor of Midrash and Related Literature, Rabbi Lewis M. Barth, Ph.D. has been a pioneer in the development of the Reform Movement in California and a catalyst for the growth of the Los Angeles campus into a vibrant center for Jewish learning and a valued academic partner to its neighbor, the University of Southern California. As he approaches the completion of his term as Dean, he shares reflections on his personal and professional life's journey.



**RABBI
LEWIS M. BARTH
PH.D.**

Jean Bloch Rosensaft

California born and bred, Dr. Lewis M. Barth is a distinguished member of the pioneering generation that has advanced the growth of Reform Judaism in the western United States. Barth grew up in the orbit of Temple Israel of Hollywood, where he became a *bar mitzvah*, was confirmed, and became president of its youth group. “I was always drawn to things of Jewish interest and to the world of my rabbis,” he recalls, pointing to the powerful influence of the leaders of his Temple — Rabbi Max Nussbaum, Rabbi Edward Zerin, and Rabbi William Kramer, as well as the rabbis of his Jewish summer camp and regional youth activities, most notably Rabbis Isaiah Zeldin and Alfred Wolf. “We were coming out of World War II and there was a burst of energy with the development of new congregations and the expansion and building programs of the few established congregations,” he remembers.

Barth recalls his first memory of Rabbi Max Nussbaum as a five-year-old during the High Holy Days in 1943: “I sat with my mother, father, and brother in what seemed to me as a child as the cavernous hall of Temple Israel and in the distance appeared a grand white-robed figure high up on the *bima*. As I began to fidget, my mother said, ‘Be quiet, the rabbi is saying something very important.’”

Thus began Barth’s decades-long mentorship by an intellectual giant who had been ordained at the Jewish Theological Seminary of Breslau, had studied at the University of Breslau, and had received his Ph.D. from the University of Würzburg with a dissertation on Kantianism and Marxism in the social philosophy of Max Adler, exploring the ethical impulse in social movements that shaped society. Nussbaum had served as the Community Rabbi of Berlin from 1934 to 1940, providing spiritual and educational leadership to the Jewish community as it struggled to withstand Nazi persecution. Nussbaum and his wife, Ruth,



Lewis Barth (above and at the steering wheel below) during his college years.

escaped via Lisbon to the United States in 1940, with the crucial help of Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, founder of the Jewish Institute of Religion. Nussbaum arrived at “Filmland’s House of Worship” in 1942.

Barth’s confirmation class met with Nussbaum every morning for a week of study during August 1953. “He introduced us to the sweep of Jewish history, and spoke



of the ideas of Maimonides, Judah ha-Levi, and Theodore Herzl. Later, as a founder of HUC-JIR’s Los Angeles campus in 1954, Nussbaum taught us, the first group of rabbinical students, about *Sefer ha-Aggadah*, Bialik and Ravnitsky’s anthology of rabbinical legends, and the use of classical sources in preaching,” Barth recalls. Many years later, Barth had the privilege of memorializing this great Zionist and humanitarian leader’s legacy through a collection of Nussbaum’s stirring sermons and articles, which he co-edited with Ruth Nussbaum, in the volume entitled *Max Nussbaum: From Berlin to Hollywood, a Mid-century Vision of Jewish Life*, published in 1994 on the 20th *yahrzeit* of Nussbaum’s death.

An avid participant in the Reform Movement’s youth programs, Barth became President of SCFTY (Southern California Federation of Temple Youth) and spent his summers at Camp Saratoga, now known as Camp Swig, in northern California. “As a teenager I created the first SCFTY study *kallah*, which took place at the Lazy Jay Ranch in the San Fernando Valley. A lot of people thought nobody would come or be interested. Well, we had a terrific group of teenagers participating and an outstanding group of rabbis teaching us.”

From SCFTY and the founding of HUC-JIR in Los Angeles emerged a group that included some of California’s leading future rabbis and scholars, including Sanford Ragins, Harvey Fields, Jerrold Goldstein, Frank Stern, Ray Zwerin, Hillel Cohn, Michael Meyer, and Allan Maller, among others. Barth describes the spirit of his friends and peers who comprised the pioneering ‘Who’s Who’ in Western American Reform Judaism: “This group shared an extraordinary excitement, intellectual and religious curiosity, and sense of commitment.”

Barth’s education was bound up with the genesis of HUC-JIR’s Los Angeles School. His senior year at Hollywood High School coincided

(continued on next page)

LEWIS BARTH

(continued)

with his joining HUC-JIR's newly inaugurated pre-rabbinical, part-time intensive Hebrew language program, which was launched at Wilshire Boulevard Temple, later located at Temple Emanuel in Beverly Hills, and ultimately situated in HUC-JIR's small campus on the Appian Way in the Hollywood hills. While majoring in American History for his B.A. at UCLA, he simultaneously continued his pre-rabbinical Hebrew studies at HUC-JIR, for which he received credit at UCLA. "There were several of us going to UCLA and HUC-JIR at the same time," Barth notes.

Following graduation from UCLA in 1959, Barth spent the next year completing the full-time post-B.A. program at HUC-JIR, leading to a Bachelor of Hebrew Letters in 1960. He then went to Israel with Ray Zwerin for a year of travel and study, occasionally sitting in on classes at The Hebrew University because at that time HUC-JIR was still in the process of constructing its Jerusalem campus and did not yet offer academic programs. At an *ulpan* (intensive Hebrew immersion course), Barth and Zwerin connected with other HUC-JIR students from Cincinnati, all of whom were studying in Israel on their own.

Barth's voyage to Israel and immersion in Hebrew was rather atypical of Reform rabbinical students from other parts of the United States at that time, but consistent with the Israel-oriented culture of his Los Angeles circle of friends and fellow students. "We were all deeply influenced by Rabbi Nussbaum, who was a committed national and international Zionist leader and whose sermons and teaching were infused by the development of the State of Israel. Furthermore, the deans of HUC-JIR/Los Angeles at that time – Rabbi Zeldin and then Dr. Alfred Gottschalk – put a strong emphasis on Hebrew language. This was compounded by the passionate teaching of Dov Vin Nun, for whom Hebrew was his life's passion. He infected us with his love of the language."

Barth returned from Israel to complete his rabbinical education in Cincinnati, together with his friends from Los Angeles. His circle expanded to include Richard Levy, today the Director of Rabbinical Studies at HUC-JIR/Los Angeles. Barth encountered an extraordinary faculty spanning the whole range of Judaic studies, including Ellis Rivkin, Alvin Reines, Samuel Sandmel, and Sheldon Blank. He studied Aramaic with Isaac Jerusalemi and his rabbinical thesis in the area of Modern Hebrew Literature was supervised by Ezra Spicehandler. "The intellectual scope of the academic environment on the Cincinnati campus was impressive."



Dr. Barth, Assistant Dean, and Dr. Alfred Gottschalk, then Dean of HUC-JIR/Los Angeles.

Upon ordination in 1964, Barth recognized that he was drawn to an academic career, notwithstanding his experiences as a pulpit student-rabbi. In fact, his earliest exposure to the pulpit had come as a fifteen-year-old, when Rabbi Zeldin asked him to conduct services at a congregation in Ventura, California. "Since I was too young to drive, my brother had to drive me there," he recalls. He also served bi-weekly pulpits as part of his rabbinical education in Los Angeles and Cincinnati.

Nussbaum's strong intellectual role-modeling was compounded by the encouragement of Barth's academic mentors at UCLA and HUC-JIR in pointing him toward a doctorate. "I was interested in Modern Hebrew Literature and wanted a background in literary criticism, which had not been part of

my undergraduate major at UCLA. I went to the University of Chicago with a scholarship from HUC-JIR, completed the M.A. in English Literature, spent additional time in Jerusalem, and then returned to Cincinnati for the doctorate."

Shifting his academic focus, he devoted the major emphasis in his doctoral studies to the field of Midrash, an area he had come to love during his rabbinical studies. His thesis advisor was Dr. Eugene Mihaly and his co-advisor was Dr. Ben-Zion Wacholder, whom he had known previously when Wacholder, while completing his Ph.D. at UCLA, had taught at HUC-JIR in Los Angeles.

Barth's dissertation was a technical analysis of Vatican 30, a very important manuscript of *Bereishit Rabba* in the Vatican Library. "I was able to acquire a microfilm of Vatican 30 and of other manuscripts of *Bereishit Rabba*, which is one of the great works of midrashic literature in Hebrew compiled sometime around 425 C.E. in *Eretz Israel* by the rabbis of the Galilee. I identified several scribes who had written different parts of the manuscript and discovered some interesting linguistic and stylistic differences reflecting the different authors within the single manuscript. There remains a lot of interest in this manuscript because of its very strong traces of Palestinian Aramaic from the time of Jesus and following."

While completing his dissertation, for which he received a Ph.D. in 1970, Barth returned to HUC-JIR/Los Angeles as an instructor, and soon found himself on the path toward heading the Los Angeles campus. "Dr. William Cutter, who had been Assistant Dean to Dr. Alfred Gottschalk, took over the responsibility for the College of Jewish Studies, and Gottschalk asked me to be the Assistant Dean. In my second year in that role, Fred Gottschalk was elected to succeed Nelson Glueck as President. When Glueck died suddenly, prior to the time when the transfer had been scheduled to take place, Gottschalk became the Acting President, and I became the Acting Dean in 1971."

This sudden transition occurred just as HUC-JIR's new campus adjacent to the University of Southern California (USC)

was being built, and Barth was drawn into the construction project and supervised the move from the Appian Way to the new building. “Our interaction with USC began to expand and it was my great pleasure and privilege to further develop the relationship that Gottschalk had already established.” HUC-JIR’s Louchheim School of Judaic Studies became, *de facto*, the undergraduate department of Jewish Studies for USC – a unique relationship that has thrived for over three decades and educated thousands of USC undergraduates of all faiths and ethnicities in Jewish history, literature, and Hebrew language.

During his first term as Dean from 1971 to 1979, Barth points to a number of pioneering accomplishments and the development of a host of innovative programs. He oversaw the relocation of HUC-JIR’s art and Judaica collections from Cincinnati to the new HUC-Skirball Museum facilities on the Los Angeles campus, and made the connection that led to the appointment of Nancy Berman as its first curator and then its director. The second largest Jewish population in America now had access to a superb educational and cultural resource illuminating the Jewish heritage.

At Bill Cutter’s recommendation, the College of Jewish Studies, which had been a teacher-training program for those teaching in religious schools in the Los Angeles area, was revised to become a full-time educational leadership development program and renamed the Rhea Hirsch School of Education, with Cutter as its director. “We wanted to train educational leaders who would take over congregational and community schools,” Barth explains. Barth also worked closely with Gerald Bubis to further develop the School of Jewish Communal Services from its beginnings on the Appian Way, while Samson Levy directed the Magnin School of Graduate Studies.

Barth’s goals focused on the Los Angeles faculty. “We had numerous outstanding part-

time faculty, but I felt that we could never become an institution of real excellence until we had a number of full-time faculty members, and I pushed for those appointments here,” Barth recalls. “The faculty appointments ranged from Stanley Gevirtz, z”l, to David Ellenson in my last year as Dean. Ellenson’s appointment was extremely important because I felt that it was absolutely essential that we have our own full-time person in Jewish Religious Thought to teach our students as well as participate in our undergraduate studies program with USC.”

Following the completion of his first tenure as Dean, Barth used the next two years to immerse himself in scholarship. He spent the first summer at the University of California, Berkeley, in an intensive classical Greek program. With a major grant from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, he was able to study in Germany and England. In Berlin, he studied with the New Testament scholar Peter von der Osten-Sacken, Director of the Institut Kirche und Judentum, which is now located at Alexander von Humboldt University. (Osten-Sacken will receive an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters at Graduation at HUC-JIR/Los Angeles this spring.) “I also pursued my own studies in Midrash and got a sense of the European, and especially the German, world of Judaic studies, about

Rabbi Lennard Thal, Dr. Barth, Dr. William Cutter, Professor Gerald Bubis, and Professor Stanley Chyet.



which I had known very little. It was far more impressive than I had ever imagined.”

The next fall, he was a Visiting Fellow at the Oxford Centre of Post-Graduate Hebrew Studies, where he initiated a close friendship with David Patterson, studied Syriac with the renowned scholar Sebastian Brock, developed a connection with Dead Sea Scroll scholar Geza Vermes, and was introduced to the field of medieval sermon-ic studies. By the spring, he was teaching at HUC-JIR’s Jerusalem School, all the while continuing his own scholarly work.

“This was an amazing two-year period in my life,” he notes. “The scholars I met in Berlin and Oxford became lifelong friends and opened up a whole new world of research. At Oxford I learned about an unpublished homily for the second day of *Rosh HaShanah* that contained an elaborate Midrashic biography of Abraham and his ten trials. The tradition that Abraham endured ten trials is attested as early as the 2nd-century B.C.E. *Book of Jubilees*, the *Mishnah*, *Avot de Rabbi Nathan*, and other works contain traces of this tradition and lists of the specific trials. The 8th-century C.E. narrative midrash, *Pirke Rabbi Eliezer* (*The Chapters of Rabbi Eliezer*), was known to contain a complete version of the legend. I subsequently published the homily in an article entitled, ‘Legend of the Ten Trials of Abraham’ in the *Hebrew Union College Annual*.”

Barth’s scholarly ties to Germany continue to this day through his biennial participation on the faculty of the “Summer Seminar” at the Institut Kirche und Judentum in Berlin. Peter von der Osten-Sacken developed this program and over the years gathered a distinguished group of scholars and religious leaders that included Dr. Michael Signer, Rabbi Sanford Ragins, Rabbi Jonathan Magonet, Dr. Susannah Heschel, Dr. Yehoyadah Amir, and Dr. Emil Fackenheim. Beginning with fifty students twenty years ago and growing to as many as 250 students

(continued on next page)

LEWIS BARTH

(continued)

over the years, the seminar continues to this day, offering German theology students the opportunity to participate in one week of intensive study and discussion of issues relating to Judaism and Christianity.

Barth explains that almost all of the students who come to this program are Protestant theology students who, in addition to having studied Greek, have studied Hebrew, are aware of the Holocaust, and are totally immersed in German and Jewish history. Many of them have been to Israel to work on a *kibbutz* or study there. “While being thoroughly steeped in the New Testament, they are intellectually hungry to understand Jewish rabbinic and later literature and history. In many ways, they are the perfect match to our own HUC-JIR students,” he notes.

Upon his return to HUC-JIR, Barth devoted the next eighteen years to teaching, scholarship, and the development of programs that transformed Reform Judaism. “The experience of teaching on a full-time basis enabled me to develop a deeper connection with our rabbinical and education students who took the introductory Midrash course. My linguistics training allowed me to take over the introductory course on Aramaic and then, as the curriculum shifted, to teach a course that introduced Aramaic language through the use of post-Biblical Aramaic texts – *Targum* and *Talmud*.”

Barth’s teaching also extended to alumni, for whom he created courses on Midrash and on Rabbis as holy men, charismatics, and wonder workers. The latter led Barth to a new area of scholarship dealing with legends about the Rabbis, and the relationship of these legends to those of saintly figures in Christianity.

He also became more involved in undergraduate teaching through HUC-JIR’s Louchheim School of Judaic Studies, which today provides Jewish studies courses for more than 600 USC students each year. He created a course on Jerusalem as a holy city for Jews, Christians, and Muslims, with the goal of enabling his students to understand the emotional, religious, and historical connections that established the centrality of



Dr. Barth receiving a proclamation honoring HUC-JIR from Los Angeles Mayor Bradley (center), accompanied by Martin Gang and Dorothy Corwin.

Jerusalem for each of these faith groups. Initially attracting ten USC students, it grew to become a very popular elective for students who came from very diverse backgrounds, including Jews, Christians, Muslims, those of Eastern religious orientations, and those of no religious affiliation.

“I vividly remember the best student in one of my classes – a devout Muslim woman who had been born in Pakistan – who asked me for a recommendation letter for her medical school application. I asked her, as someone who read the Koran every day, what her experience had been like in the course. She said that had she not taken the course, she would never have understood that Jews have the same feelings about Jerusalem that Muslims have. I found her statement so coherent with my goals for the course, which included the development of the capacity to imagine and understand the faith, values, and commitments of others.”

Barth has always been in the vanguard regarding the utilization of technology in the service of scholarship and teaching. In the early 1990s, he began to be aware of an initiative that was taking place in the humanities that was focused on utilizing computers for editing text material. He attended a two-week institute at Princeton under the auspices of The Center for Electronic Text in the Humanities, which was an eye-opening experience. He learned how research universities in the United States and throughout Europe were utilizing computers not only to edit text but to provide educational materials for their courses.

“I became aware of the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI), an international collaborative project, which scholars had developed for the encoding of manuscripts and all kinds of printed material. I began to look into how this type of encoding might be applied to Hebrew manuscripts and began to develop the resources for understanding the history and tradition of the manuscripts in which I was interested.”

The *Pirge Rabbi Eliezer* was an excellent means of experimenting with this new technology. “This text is a midrashic retelling of significant aspects of the biblical narrative, from the creation story through the *Book of Esther* and contains legends found in the *Book of Jubilees*, a large amount of material on the Jewish calendar, as well as passages that clearly relate to early streams of Jewish mysticism. It was written in the Land of Israel, probably during the 8th century C.E. in the early Muslim period, and includes references to the wives of Ishmael, Aisha, and Fatima, women renown in Islamic tradition. Written in Hebrew with a few non-Hebrew loan words in transliteration, it was exceedingly popular in medieval and pre-modern traditionalist Jewish literary circles and is preserved in more than twenty complete manuscripts and more than seventy-five partial manuscripts and fragments.

Over thirty printed editions have appeared since the 16th century.”

Barth's long-range and as yet unfulfilled goal was to create an electronic publication of all *Pirque Rabbi Eliezer* manuscripts and fragments in two forms: digital facsimiles and transcriptions with hypertext links. “Recent hypotheses regarding the development of such medieval Hebrew manuscripts would argue that each manuscript of a work is a completely new literary creation. Electronic publication would provide a visual representation of each manuscript with the possibility of comparing different readings of specific passages simultaneously – something that was impossible before the advent of computers.”

Over the next three years, he compiled bibliographical resources – lists of manuscripts and their locations throughout the world, including HUC-JIR's manuscript material and early printed editions that were produced at a time of contact with Muslim civilization as well as microfilms of manuscripts from other libraries around the world. He began the initial stages of encoding this work and presented papers at scholarly conferences devoted to electronic text editing.

“In addition to the encoding of textual material, digitization of manuscripts has become an important part of the scholar's work. I worked closely with Dr. David Gilner, Director of Libraries at HUC-JIR, who arranged with IBM to digitize three of HUC-JIR's *Pirque Rabbi Eliezer* manuscripts. This material can be accessed at: www.huc.edu/faculty/faculty/barth.shtml.

Barth's innovative spirit extends from the academic world out into the larger community and the lives of Reform Jews today. In partnership with Dr. David James of New York, he was the moving force in the establishment of The *Berit Mila* Program of Reform Judaism. *Berit Mila*, circumcision, signifies a boy's covenant with God and membership in the Jewish faith through an ancient ritual grounded in the biblical story of Abraham. “The *Berit Mila* Program grew out of a faculty meeting in the early 1970s, when I was asked to respond to an inquiry by Dr. Deborah Cohen, an obstetrician

associated with a California congregation, who sought to become a female *mohel* (a ritual circumciser), but had been turned away by the Orthodox and the Conservative Movements.”

Barth spent a year in consultation with faculty and young rabbinical colleagues, all of whom confirmed that a Reform pro-



gram to facilitate Jewish ritual circumcision was a necessity due to the lack of *mohalim/ot* in some parts of the United States and the inability of Reform Jews to find one who could respond to their religious needs at a crucial life-cycle moment. This coincided with the Central Conference of American Rabbis' conference in Los Angeles that affirmed patrilineal descent for Reform Jewry in 1983. “There was concern that the Orthodox *mohalim* would not have a respectful attitude toward Reform Judaism or that they would not accept the Jewish status of a mother who had converted or a child whose Jewish identity descended from the father.”

A *Berit Mila* course was structured by a group of HUC-JIR faculty while Dr. Cohen gathered a number of her friends who were also interested in the training. Simultaneously, Rabbi Daniel Syme, then Director of the Department of Education of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (now the

URJ), put Barth in touch Dr. James, who had approached the Union with the request to develop such training. Through word-of-mouth alone, sixteen people showed up for the first fourteen-week course, which took place at Stephen Wise Temple one evening a week. Nine months later, the *Berit Mila* Board of Reform Judaism was established and met in New York for the first time. Eleven healthcare professionals who had taken the first course in California fulfilled the requirements established by the Board, yielding the first group of Reform *mohalim*.

This program, a joint project of HUC-JIR, the CCAR, and the URJ, quickly grew to offer courses in other communities throughout the United States and Canada. The large number of medical professionals certified as *mohalim* led to the creation of the National Organization of *Mohalim* (NOAM), which sponsors biennial national conferences. The extensive essays and text material collected for the course were published in 1990 in the book *Berit Mila in the Reform Context*, edited by Barth.

Today, nearly 300 *mohalim/ot* have been certified. This program, directed in recent years by Rabbi Donielle Aaron, serves as a paradigm of adult religious instruction designed for skilled professionals who want to serve the Jewish community using their own professional resources.

In 1997, nearly a generation after his first tenure as Dean, Barth was called upon again to lead the Los Angeles campus. Among his first objectives was the strengthening of its Board of Overseers. “It has been a great pleasure to work closely with Howard Bernstein, the past Chair, and with Robert Kopple, the current Chair of our Board of Overseers. Together, we have been successful in reconstituting the Board and energizing it to be a significant source of support, at the same time enhancing the campus's public profile in the larger community. I'm really proud of the activities and goals that we have accomplished through the productive synergy between HUC-JIR's volunteer and professional leadership.”

Barth points to the celebration of HUC-JIR's 125th anniversary as a milestone that

(continued on next page)

LEWIS BARTH

(continued)

presented the College-Institute in a new way to supporters. “Our tribute dinner honoring Stanley and Ilene Gold for their catalytic leadership and heartwarming generosity to the College-Institute was an extraordinary occasion in the history of our campus. We are enormously grateful to Stanley, first as Chair of HUC-JIR’s Board of Governors and now as Chair of USC’s Board of Trustees, and to Ilene as a Vice Chair of our Board of Overseers and a member of the USC College’s Board of

and USC. His academic vision and rigor have been responsible for recent appointments that have deepened the course and programmatic offerings at both institutions. I thank Dean Barth for the profound legacy that he accomplished and upon which we are pledged to continue to build.”

Dean Aoun added, “Lewis Barth has played an indispensable role in nurturing the bond between USC and HUC-JIR by steadfastly encouraging a spirit of goodwill and camaraderie between the two campuses. The collaboration between our two institutions embodies the College’s belief that remarkable things can happen when innovative partnerships are built with other institu-

USC’s new Shoah Foundation Institute.

Reflecting on his role as a bridge-builder between these two institutions, Barth said, “For me, this is a celebration of a remarkable relationship, of joint accomplishments, and of friendships, some of which span a lifetime and some of which have started just in the last months. Accomplishments for all of us, at HUC-JIR and at USC, have a collaborative foundation and a shared commitment to excellence of scholarship and teaching.”

Over the past nine years, Barth has celebrated another significant milestone: the expansion of the Los Angeles Rabbinical School from offering two years of study (necessitat-



At the USC dinner honoring Dr. Barth: Dr. David Ellenson, Dr. Joye Weisel-Barth, Dr. Barth, Ilene and Stanley Gold, and Dean Joseph Aoun.

Councilors, for playing a crucial role in strengthening HUC-JIR and reinforcing the unique partnership between our religious seminary and USC, a major secular research university. This is a precious relationship that enriches the academic and cultural landscapes of both partners.”

Barth’s 35-year-long contribution to this partnership was honored on February 13, 2006 at a dinner hosted by USC Dean Joseph Aoun, which was attended by more than 100 leaders and scholars from USC and HUC-JIR. During the celebratory program, Rabbi Ellenson, President of the College-Institute, remarked, “Lewis Barth’s leadership and warmth have facilitated the development of personal relationships among professors and administrators at HUC-JIR

tions. This dynamic partnership will serve as a testament to his leadership long into the future.”

Under Barth’s leadership, USC’s undergraduates study with HUC-JIR’s scholars who teach a dozen USC courses each semester. HUC-JIR and USC also have partnered to offer joint master’s degrees pairing the School of Jewish Communal Service with USC’s schools of social work, gerontology, communications management, business administration, and public administration and arts. HUC-JIR is an active participant in Jewish life at USC, working with USC’s Office of Religious Life, USC Hillel, the USC Casden Institute for the Study of the Jewish Role in American Life, the USC Center for Religious and Civic Culture, and

ing students to transfer to Cincinnati or New York to complete the five-year program for ordination) to four years and the development of a fully ordaining program. The first ordination in Los Angeles in 2002 was witnessed by a packed sanctuary at the Wilshire Boulevard Temple. “Each ordinee carried a Torah scroll, rolled to a portion that expressed his or her personal mission. The ordinees were blessed under a magnificent *huppah* (canopy) designed by Peachy Levy, a gift of the Pacific Association of Reform Rabbis. We all felt a profound sense of fulfillment in bringing forth a new generation of leaders for the Jewish people.”

He has seen the Rhea Hirsch School of Education, headed by Professor Sara S. Lee, grow as a national center for research in Jewish



Dr. Barth and Rabbi Richard Levy, Director of the Rabbinical School, celebrating Sukkot at HUC-JIR/Los Angeles.

education. Under the guidance of Dr. Michael Zeldin, Professor of Education and Director of Day School Education, and Dr. Isa Aron, Professor of Education, there has been the development of the ECE (Experiment in Congregational Education), ECE-Reimagine, Jewish Day Schools for the 21st Century, DeLeT (Day School Leadership Through Training), Creating Teaching Excellence in Congregational Education, and the newest program, the Concentration in Day School Education. These initiatives are having an impact on generations of learners throughout the Reform Movement's congregations and schools.

Barth has been the driving force in the creation of the Institute on Judaism and Sexual Orientation and the Jeff Herman Virtual Resource Center (see pages 23-25), to ensure that HUC-JIR's students and alumni are skilled in transforming congregations and communities into inclusive environments responsive to the needs of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender Jews.

The texture of Jewish studies has been greatly enriched by Barth's commitment to the inclusion of Sephardic heritage in the rabbinical core curriculum. With the generous support of the Maurice Amado Foundation and with the guidance of Dr. Mark Kligman, Professor of Musicology at HUC-JIR/New York, students on all campuses benefit from courses, visiting lectures, and workshops that expand their understanding of the

diversity of Jewish cultural heritage.

Aware of health crises affecting Jewish families and the community at large, Barth encouraged Dr. William Cutter's pioneering vision that led to the establishment of the Kalsman Institute on Judaism and Health.

This national resource center convenes spiritual leaders, medical professionals, and Jewish community members for confer-

ences and research projects on issues bridging religion, bioethics, and healthcare, and provides training for HUC-JIR's students and alumni in hospital chaplaincy and pastoral care. "We are grateful to the Kalsman family and Peachy and Mark Levy, for their support of this innovative program, which honors Judaism's mandate to preserve and enhance life," notes Barth.

His appreciation for technology in the service of higher education can be seen in the campus's *HaMercaz*, a multi-purpose learning environment that is the home for the National

Department of Distance Education, headed by Gregg Alpert. "*HaMercaz* unites the three foundations of Judaism: Torah, worship, and acts of loving kindness," Barth explains.

HaMercaz houses the newly dedicated Simha and Sara Lainer *Beit Midrash*, which reinforces Barth's forward-looking vision for study in the 21st century, where "tradition and technology are blended in a space that houses traditional texts and study guides as well as databases and computer programs in workstations, all linked in a wireless environment."

HaMercaz also offers a flexible worship space allowing for experimentation with different prayer modes; the Tartak Learning Center's resources for educators; the Tzedakah Center; and changing exhibitions of contemporary art expressing Jewish themes. He seeks to enhance the aesthetic welcome to students and faculty by bringing artists and their work into the classrooms on an ongoing basis.

Barth believes that HUC-JIR has a role to play in the larger University/Exposition Park neighborhood of Los Angeles. With the assistance of Joan Spearman, Director of Operations and an active member of the Trinity Baptist Church, each summer two

(continued on next page)

HUC-JIR/Los Angeles's first Ordination Ceremony, held on May 5, 2002 at Wilshire Boulevard Temple.





At the November 13, 2005 dedication of the Friends of the Frances-Henry Library Tribute Wall and the Donald and Marian DeWitt Family Rare Book and Preservation Fund: (from left) Dr. Barth, Harvey Horowitz, Librarian Emeritus; Marian DeWitt; Betty Jacobs; Peachy and Mark Levy; and Dr. Yaffa Weisman, Librarian. Marian DeWitt, together with her family, endowed a fund to ensure the preservation and growth of the Frances-Henry Library's rare book collection. Betty Jacobs donated the library of her late husband, Rabbi Sidney Jacobs, z"l.

LEWIS BARTH

(continued)

African-American high school students from that congregation have internships at HUC-JIR, where they are introduced to the workplace and are mentored for college and professional careers.

He points with pride to HUC-JIR students' solidarity with striking hotel workers in recent months. "The workers represented the rainbow of American minorities. Our students stayed with them and brought them food. The strikers were grateful that there were Jews who cared about them."

Barth's commitment to compassion and caring are echoed by his wife, Dr. Joye Weisel-Barth. "Joye's professional expertise as a psychologist and psychoanalyst associated with the Institute for Contemporary Psychoanalysis has given me access to professional colleagues who have enriched the teaching of human relations and Jewish communal service at the College-Institute. With her influence, I have learned how to listen better to others, from faculty meetings and discussions on curriculum to exchanges with students. When she speaks about the recent shift from a hierarchical relationship between the therapist and the client to more of an interchange between two individuals whose responsibilities are different, I find

parallels in the professional relationships of our graduates and their congregants."

The Barths have five children in their blended family: Rachel Barth Krejci lives in Prague and works for Monster.com; Aaron Barth is on the faculty of the University of California-Irvine in the field of astronomy; Joshua Weisel is a manager for actors; Jason Weisel is studying business; and Jessica Weisel is an attorney.

In truth, Barth's family extends to the entire HUC-JIR community of administration, faculty, students, staff, and devoted lay leaders. He has established a culture of warmth and mutual support that has vitalized the Los Angeles campus. Moreover, he explains, "It has given me great satisfaction that these years have empowered my administrative colleagues and faculty to be creative, grow

Dr. Barth and Dr. Joye Weisel-Barth.

their programs, and develop their research and teaching in ways that are having a tangible impact on students' education. The Los Angeles School has become renowned as a pace-setting center for innovation and original thinking that is having an impact beyond the walls of the College-Institute and into the larger Jewish community and the public at large." The Board of Governors recognized Barth's achievements at their May 8th meeting with a resolution thanking him for his years of service to HUC-JIR, the Reform Movement, and the Jewish people.

Looking to the future, Barth's sabbatical will be filled with research and discovery, and his return to the classroom the following year will be keenly awaited by his students. As he transitions to the next productive phase of his career, his rich legacy of transformative and visionary leadership will endure as a source of inspiration. ■



JEWISH VALUES AND INCLUSIVITY: THE INSTITUTE FOR JUDAISM AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Francine Lis

"A young man who was struggling with his sexuality attended afternoon services with his family on Yom Kippur. As customary, the Torah portion for Yom Kippur afternoon included the prohibitions against homosexuality. The rabbi preached a sermon, which included the traditional message that homosexuality is an abomination. After the sermon, the young man excused himself and went home. When the parents returned home from services, they found the son had taken his own life. They understood that their son believed there was no place for a gay man in the Jewish community. The rabbi, horrified by the power of his words, never preached about the topic again." Richard Wortman, a member of the Los Angeles Board of Overseers and early benefactor of the Institute for Judaism and Sexual Orientation will never forget this tragic event. "Perhaps had there been training for rabbis in lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) issues, maybe the outcome would have been different."

The College-Institute's Institute for Judaism and Sexual Orientation (IJSO) reflects the inclusive religious ideals of Reform Judaism. The Reform Movement has been the pioneering arm of Judaism in the support of civil and religious rights for gay men and lesbians, including equal treatment under the law, ordination, and civil and religious marriage. What makes the IJSO so unique is its place at the juncture of academia and professional training and at the heart of the Reform Movement's educational matrix, where Jewish traditions and ethics combine in the spirit of social justice, holiness, and community.

The Institute began with the vision of a few pioneers who wanted to create lasting social change in the Reform Movement by welcoming all Jews, regardless of their sexual orientation. One of those early visionaries was the late Rabbi Alexander Schindler, former president



Lowell Selvin, Chairman of the IJSO Advisory Board.

of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (now the URJ), who urged the Jewish community to "cross the boundaries of Otherness" and become a true ally of gay and lesbian Jews. "I, a leader of this movement for Reform Judaism; I, a refugee from Hitler's Germany... I declare myself a rabbi for all Jews, at every moment of life, not only for heterosexual Jews, or for gay Jews only at their funerals," he said.

When Dr. Lewis M. Barth embarked upon his second term as Dean of the Los Angeles School in 1997, he recognized that during the preceding two decades there had been extensive changes in Reform Judaism and that the Reform Movement had come to the forefront of religious denominations that are inclusive of

LGBT people. "I realized that in spite of the changes, the College-Institute had not yet initiated any programs to train our future Jewish leaders to work with LGBT people or their families. My sense of the need for this type of training was reinforced by conversations internally with faculty and externally with colleagues, including Rabbis Lisa Edwards, Denise Eger, Don Goor, and Sanford Ragins, all of whom strongly supported this idea. My dear friends Agnes and Rabbi Erwin Herman helped with this project



Dr. Joel L. Kushner, IJSO Director

through the dedication of the Jeff Herman Virtual Resource Center (see page 25). I am extraordinarily grateful to the new chair of our Advisory Board, Lowell Selvin, to our new director, Dr. Joel L. Kushner, and to numerous colleagues and friends of the College-Institute who are taking the program to a whole new stage of development."

From its origins in 2000 as a project to help students

(continued on next page)

“The IJSO is driven by Jewish religious values and the spiritual quest for holiness. With this foundation and the knowledge that we are *b’tzelem elohim*, created in the image of God, we believe that these values call us to achieve complete inclusion, integration, and equal standing of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people in our congregations and communities.”

on the Los Angeles campus better understand LGBT issues in the Jewish community, the IJSO is now a national institute, housed at HUC-JIR/Los Angeles, with its first director, Dr. Joel Kushner, who was appointed in September 2005. Prior to joining HUC-JIR, Dr. Kushner was a behavioral healthcare consultant. “On a professional level, I was looking for a challenge and opportunities for new learning. I also wanted work that was more personally meaningful. With this position, I could combine two significant aspects of my life and make a critical and needed contribution.”

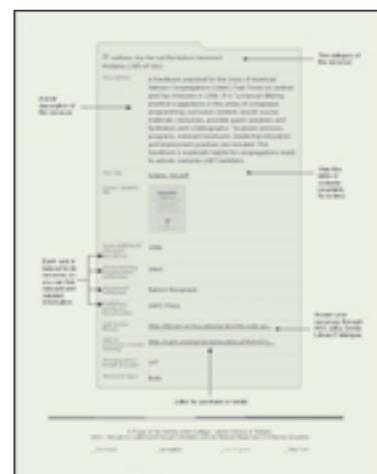
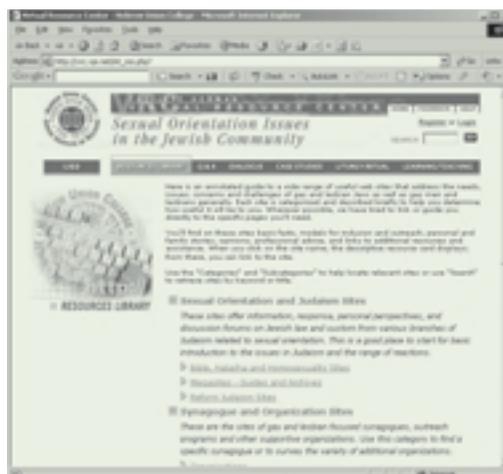
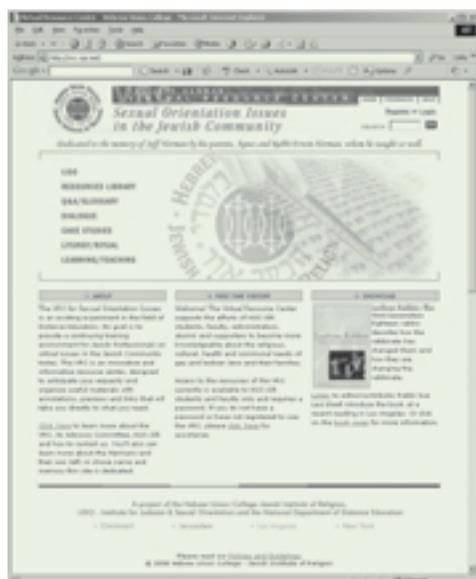
Lowell Selvin, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of PlanetOut Inc., was recently appointed the chair of the IJSO Advisory Board. In 2004, Selvin’s leadership and skill in leading the IJSO planning process resulted in the creation of an Institute that embraces a systemic and effective effort to prepare Jewish religious, educational, and communal leaders to champion this cause. “As a Jew and as a

gay man, I am compelled to support education that increases the opportunity for rabbis and congregations to fully welcome gay and lesbian members into the spiritual and community experience that they desire and deserve,” Selvin noted. “Given that two of the core principles of Judaism are justice and human rights activism, I believe progressive Jewish religious institutions can and should be a welcoming place for all their members.”

“The IJSO is driven by Jewish religious values and the spiritual quest for holiness,” explains Kushner. “With this foundation and the knowledge that we are *b’tzelem elohim*, created in the image of God, we believe that these values call us to achieve complete inclusion, integration, and equal standing of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in our congregations and communities. To achieve this, the Institute educates and trains students, scholars, and professionals toward this goal. We hope that the people we train will develop a theology and practice of inclu-

sion that will guide them in the transformation of those they touch into inclusive and welcoming communities. The Institute also seeks to encourage progressive dialogue between organizations within the Reform Movement on LGBT topics as well as with community-based educational, political, and social service organizations.”

The IJSO offers specialized education seminars and workshops on the unique needs and issues of the LGBT community. A comprehensive set of resources is available in online format through the Jeff Herman Virtual Resource Center on Sexual Orientation Issues in the Jewish Community (see page 25) and includes discussions on organizing for inclusion and systemic change. Through case studies, lectures by noted scholars, and by intensive practical experience gained in fieldwork, HUC-JIR’s students have broadened their knowledge and developed skills, while alumni have accessed meaningful resources to transform communities.



The Jeff Herman Virtual Resource Center (JHVR), an innovative and interactive collection of multimedia resources for LGBT issues in Judaism, is located on HUC-JIR’s website at: www.huc.edu/ijso/jhvr

Dr. Kushner recalls a recent situation that reminds him why this work is so important. “A straight rabbinical student attended the IJSO trainings at HUC-JIR. She later went to work at a congregation and wanted to do teacher education on LGBT topics in the religious school. She was told that there was no need for this. When the school year started and a family tree exercise was given out in an elementary class, one child went to the teacher and said that her family did not look like what was printed on the form. The teacher’s response was to tell the child not to do the exercise.” Dr. Kushner believes that “this lack of understanding and erasure is damaging and can be avoided through education.”

Through the Institute’s programs, HUC-JIR’s students develop skills to move individuals, institutions, and communities toward the goals of inclusion and acceptance of diversity. The IJSO provides a myriad of resources and services, including LGBT liturgies and life-cycle rituals, field internships, academic conferences, and consulting to community groups. Third-year rabbinical student Cookie Lea Olshein has already benefited from the IJSO. “As a heterosexual woman, I never imagined that the sexual orientation of rabbis would become an issue in my rabbinate. However, due to some congregants’ issues with another student’s sexual orientation, I became involved in helping my congregation work through their concerns. Joel Kushner and the IJSO have been invaluable resources for formulating strategies for my student pulpit and have helped me tremendously with dealing with this sensitive issue.”

Rabbi Sharon Clevenger, who was ordained in Los Angeles in 2003, recalls, “As I began my third year of rabbinical school at HUC-JIR, I felt pretty blessed. I was having all-around positive learning experiences. I had interesting and useful classes, excellent teachers, and a marvelous student pulpit as my learning laboratory. My congregants were more or less just like me. I began to feel that I was too comfortable. How could I grow as a rabbi and be prepared to serve those who felt themselves to be somehow unsafe in their world? Through what would become the IJSO, I had an opportunity to serve as a

THE JEFF HERMAN VIRTUAL RESOURCE CENTER ON SEXUAL ORIENTATION ISSUES IN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY



Rabbi Erwin Herman (right) and his wife Agnes (left) and their children Jeff, z”l, and Judi (center).

The year was 1969. Agnes Herman, a social worker, and her husband, Rabbi Erwin Herman, confronted their 19-year-old son, Jeff, about his recent distance and behavior and wondered if he had “a girlfriend in trouble,” was on drugs, or was homosexual. Jeff told his parents that he was gay. Both their medical doctor and a therapist concurred that they could not change their son. The Hermans began the road to understanding this new aspect of their son’s identity.

In 1972, as the Director of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations’ Pacific Southwest Council and National Director of Regional Activities, Rabbi Herman became actively involved in Los Angeles with Beth Chayim Chadashim, the first gay and lesbian congregation. He was instrumental in developing the lay-led services and adult education classes, obtaining speakers, and lending a Torah and other ritual objects. Ultimately, he encouraged the congregation to apply for entrance into the UAHC. After much debate, their application was accepted in 1974.

Tragically, in 1992, the Hermans lost their son to AIDS. “We wanted to do something for him,” says Agnes Herman. “He was not a scholar, so we didn’t want to do a scholarship. We decid-

ed not to create a traditional Jewish foundation. We waited a long time and then in 2000, Dean Lewis M. Barth visited San Diego to raise awareness about the College-Institute’s work on sexual orientation issues. We listened and thought, finally, this is it.”

Rabbinical Intern at Beth Chayim Chadashim, the world’s first LGBT congregation. I am a heterosexual woman and I imagined that this would give me a chance to learn firsthand how it feels to be an outsider, to come out, and to have assumptions made about me – and I was right! I developed a strong understanding of the nature of suffering, and of the ways people can find strength to carry on. These lessons have served me well.”

That connection led to the creation of the Jeff Herman Virtual Resource Center on Sexual Orientation Issues in the Jewish Community, in memory of their beloved son. The Jeff Herman Virtual Resource Center (JHVRC) is a web-based learning environment for LGBT issues in Judaism, developed by HUC-JIR’s National Department of Distance Education (www.huc.edu/ijso/jhvrc). Created originally for students and, since December 2004, available to HUC-JIR alumni, this electronic compendium of Jewish texts, case studies, interviews, religious resources, LGBT liturgy and life cycle rituals, scholarly presentations, and articles can be utilized to support the case for LGBT inclusion by professionals in every arena. The next phase of the JHVRC will be to open it up to the public as a resource site.

The IJSO’s founding Rabbinical Committee includes Rabbi Lisa Edwards, Rabbi Denise L. Eger, Rabbi Don Goor, and Rabbi Sanford Ragins. The faculty liaison is Dr. Yaffa Weisman. Generous funding comes from the Liberty Hill Foundation, the Galinson Family Foundation, the Shefa Fund, Richard Wortman, Rabbi Erwin and Agnes Herman, and other individual donors who have helped make the dream of the IJSO a reality. ■

CREATING A CARING COMMUNITY: CLINICAL PASTORAL EDUCATION AT HUC-JIR/CINCINNATI

Jean Bloch Rosensaft

“I cannot imagine my rabbinical education without CPE,” says Michelle Werner, C ’06. “Nothing prepares a rabbinical student to embrace the sacred role more than this training. We are welcomed as someone to whom it is safe to speak about aspects of life not often shared. For a family in need, I was the one with whom they spoke about matters religious, deeply sad, and transcendent.” Werner’s reflections of her chaplaincy in the Bone Marrow Transplant Unit at Cincinnati’s Jewish Hospital demonstrate the CPE program’s significant role in infusing leadership and excellence in students’ professional development. In December 2005, after ten years of satellite accreditation, most recently with Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center, HUC-JIR received independent accreditation to offer Level I and Level II CPE training.

The long road to this accreditation began over fifteen years ago in September 1990, when Rabbi Julie Schwartz joined with the Reverend Henry B. Marksberry, then Director of Pastoral Care and Education at Bethesda Hospital, to sponsor a school year unit of Basic (now Level I) CPE at The Jewish Hospital. With the support of the Jewish Federation of Cincinnati, the satellite program grew to include

The Association for Clinical Pastoral Education recently designated HUC-JIR/Cincinnati as the first rabbinical seminary – and one of only two seminaries currently accredited among hundreds of hospitals, long-term care facilities, hospices, and other medical services – to offer accredited Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). The effort toward accreditation was led by Rabbi Ruth Alpers, Jay Stein Director of Human Relations, who oversees the CPE program and supervises the CPE students in an intensive learning-centered curriculum that enables HUC-JIR’s students to become effective pastoral care givers.



Rabbinical students Evon Yakar, Jonathan Greenberg, and Rabbi Ruth Alpers at the Jewish Hospital, where the students had clinical placements this year.

a summer intensive unit in June 1991 and offered summer stipends for students.

As a rabbinical student, Rabbi Ruth Alpers (pictured above), C ’94, took two units of CPE before such training became a requirement in the rabbinical program. “This experience was transformative in terms of my understanding of my rabbinical direction and how I wanted to

direct my career,” she recalls. “In my first pulpit at Temple Israel in Boston, I realized that 90% of my time was devoted to pastoral care in some way – not only in the context of hospital and nursing home visits, but when people came into my office or stopped in the hall to talk, or during life-cycle events from weddings and baby namings to funerals. These were all pastoral

care opportunities.”

When Alpers returned to her *alma mater* in 1999 to succeed Schwartz as the Jay Stein Director of Human Relations, she spoke with the Reverend William Scrivener, the Director of Pastoral Care at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center, and inquired about starting an independently accredited CPE program at HUC-JIR. This was an ambitious goal, since only one other seminary, the Eastern Mennonite Seminary in Virginia, was accredited and HUC-JIR would become the first Jewish seminary to achieve this status.

Adding a Jewish dimension to CPE is a significant contribution to the field, since “accredited Clinical Pastoral Education venues and the Association for of Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE) are organizations and ways of learning that are primarily Protestant and Catholic,” Alpers explains. “Consequently, before HUC-JIR’s accreditation, Jews who became involved with CPE were involved with supervisors who didn’t necessarily have an understanding of Judaism and its theology, values, and traditions.”

From Alpers’s perspective, HUC-JIR’s CPE aspirations were a way of increasing the diversity that is present in the ACPE. “In a community in which there are a limited number of rabbis with expertise in the area to serve as mentors, it was deemed that establishing an accredited CPE program at HUC-JIR/Cincinnati was the best way to proceed and offer this valuable form of education. It provided a way of ensuring that Jewish students could learn from Jewish values and texts and of offering this enrichment to seminarians of other faiths who

sought to have a Jewish experience. Thus, we have Protestant and Catholic seminarians who want to have this study experience with a rabbi and Jewish students. Accreditation enables us to get out into the broader interfaith community in ways that are different from the communal and organizational interfaith relationships.”

CPE at HUC-JIR/Cincinnati parallels programs on the other campuses, from the Blaustein Pastoral Counseling Centers in New York and Jerusalem to the Kalsman Institute on Judaism and Health in Los Angeles. Together, these programs offer HUC-JIR students the crucial training, fieldwork, supervision, and mentorship to enable them to offer compassion and care to those in need.

The rigorous program entails at least four-hundred hours of on-site supervised work in area hospitals, hospices, and clinics; regularly scheduled classroom meetings with supervisors; intensive peer review discussions with classmates; and ongoing self-assessment. Students must apply to the program and have a screening interview. The group is limited to six students per [Level I] unit of CPE, which Alpers offers either as an intensive summer program or in a more extended format throughout the academic year. Certification as a chaplain requires a minimum four units of CPE and an additional year of supervised work.

“I look for individuals who are open to feedback and to examining their own motivation, who have a curiosity about others and themselves and how they function in a group situation,” Alpers describes. She seeks balance in gender and life experi-

ence, as well. Ultimately, she puts together a group that will be able to work productively together. “Everything we do as Jewish professionals, regardless of where we locate our ‘pulpits,’ involves working in groups,” she notes. The program is open to students in the rabbinical, cantorial, education, and communal service programs who seek this kind of in-depth theological and practical training.

“As supervisor, I ask the students to reflect on how their theology supports them in the situations in which they find themselves, where their theology is challenged, and what meaning they take out of their experiences,” Alpers explains. “At the same time that they are learning to help others, I am working with them to help them develop their own personal growth – to reach an ‘aha’ moment when they are able to make a connection between something they have been working on in their own life and relate it to the work they are doing in the hospital or in the congregation.”

Cathy Beumer, RNC, MSN, a Clinical Nurse Leader at Cincinnati’s Jewish Hospital, notes that “HUC-JIR students’ contribution can be summed up in one word: Presence. The students learn to be there for the patient and the family, listening to their stories, their worries, their concerns, and giving a non-medical perspective to the experience of illness and healing. CPE students have helped our patients and families in times of crisis by being a calming presence and offering prayer.”

As chaplains, CPE students work with patients and families of all faiths. Rabbinical student Michelle Werner describes reciting the

Shehechyanu prayer in Hebrew and English for a Catholic patient about to receive a stem cell transplant. “Surrounded by the attending physician, nurses, and family, these people truly were rejoicing in having been able to be sustained so as to reach that moment, a moment so resplendent with hope.”

Alpers evaluates her students’ growth and learning individually at the conclusion of the course, as “each student begins and ends the course in a different place, based on his or her own life experience.” She notes that “HUC-JIR faculty have observed that students who have completed a unit of CPE are more mature and able to ask more integrated questions about the class material. Students come out of CPE with a more balanced way of looking at the world and the people they will serve, with fewer illusions about death, struggle, crisis, and illness.”

“My goal is to convey to our students the importance of pas-

toral care relationships in their professional work beyond the healthcare facility. I want to broaden their thinking and understanding of the full breadth of where they can make an impact, whether in a congregation, in an institution, in a school, or wherever their careers take them. Rabbi Jeremy Barras, C ’02, affirms that Alpers’s work has had an impact. “Without a doubt, CPE prepared me for life as a rabbi in a congregational setting.”

Alpers hopes that the CPE program can be offered one day to alumni, who could convene by video conference or intensive days of on-site study and who would be able to use their congregations or other professional placements as their clinical settings. “I love the work that I do,” Alpers concludes. “When students feel that they have had a transformative learning experience, it doesn’t get any better than that. Everything I do is related to trying to help our students become the best they can be to serve the Jewish community.” ■



Rabbinical student Jonathan Greenberg writing a patient's chart note at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center following a pastoral visit.

Journey to Nuremberg: Memory and Reconciliation after the Holocaust

Rachel Litcofsky

Two generations after the Holocaust, how does the Jewish tradition understand the concepts of memory and reconciliation, and what do these concepts have to teach us today? In September 2005, a group of HUC-JIR students, alumni, and faculty traveled to Germany, together with American Catholic graduate students in history and theology from the University of Notre Dame, to meet with non-Jewish German and Polish seminarians and explore the enduring impact of history on religious identity and interfaith relations.

The journey to Nuremberg, entitled *Memory and Reconciliation: Building for the Future – Jewish-Christian Relations in Cultural Context*, involved a diverse group from the College-Institute: Dr. Yehoyada Amir, Director of the Israel Rabbinical Program at HUC-JIR/Jerusalem; Adam Allenberg, RHSOE '05 and fourth-year rabbinical student at HUC-JIR/Los Angeles; Dara Frimmer, fifth-year rabbinical student at HUC-JIR/New York; Rabbi Mira Regev, ordained at

HUC-JIR/Jerusalem; and Rebecca Milder, fourth-year rabbinical student at HUC-JIR/Cincinnati. Prior to this seven-day international conference, none of the students had ever visited Germany.

The seminar examined history before, during, and after the *Shoah*, with a particular focus on the International War Crimes Trials held in Nuremberg in 1946. “Nuremberg provided a backdrop where students would be able to physically access what was there, what was missing, and how the post-World War II situation had changed,” explains Dr. Michael A. Signer, C ’70 and Abrams Professor of Jewish Thought and Culture in the Department of

Theology at Notre Dame. “This program broadened the horizons of our Jewish and Catholic students. It enabled them to see that they could share the religious dimension of their life with others and could learn from other religious traditions without feeling put upon or proselytized.”

Joining Rabbi Signer and the group of Jewish, Catholic, and European students were his wife, Betty Signer, the originator of this program (see sidebar); the director of Jewish-Christian relations from the St. Joseph Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana; and theologians from Germany and Poland.



“Memory and Reconciliation” at work:

1. HUC-JIR and Notre Dame students getting to know each other at dinner.

2. Dr. Yehoyada Amir unrolling the Torah scroll and teaching in a rural synagogue in Tucherstfeld.

3. Adam Allenberg behind the microphone, representing the prosecution in a simulated international war crimes trial.

The group sought insight into the Jewish life that had been destroyed by Nazi Germany by tracing the remnants of Jewish heritage in tours of museums, including the Levi Strauss Museum, and a synagogue in Fuerth. Their visit to the newly constructed synagogue in Bamberg enabled them to witness the renaissance of Jewish life in Germany, as well. Adam Allenberg recalls that he initially found it “strange to come to a place and to imagine that it is like any other, when I have such an emotional tie to its history.”

A walking tour of Nuremberg enabled the group to understand the history of the city and to analyze why they had come on

this journey. They explored neighborhoods once occupied by Jewish families and businesses to see how or if monuments or plaques had been used to memorialize the *Shoah*. This was of particular interest to Dara Frimmer, who says she “paid attention to the monuments and memorials in relation to how they teach about this city’s history.”

Settings from the past served as mobile classrooms to discuss current events. The group walked the grounds where Nazi party rallies took place to understand the political phenomenon of Nazism and conducted a panel discussion on the meaning of public assembly and its effect on political life. As an invaluable lesson on justice, reconstruction, and repentance, the students staged simulated ‘Nuremberg Trials’ in a courtroom setting. The prosecution was represented by a Polish and HUC-JIR student team while the defense was represented by a Notre Dame and German student team.

Throughout the week, much of the interfaith exchange took place in a youth hostel with facilities that were conducive to holding open and honest discussions on justice, reconstruction, and restitution. Students from different nationalities were assigned to room together to encourage communication on a more informal level, with the hope that these relationships would endure long after the program ended. In addition, each day’s itinerary was filled with site-visits in and around the city, social and personal time to digest the information, and small and larger group discussions, both formal and informal, to share reactions and reflections. “When people are able to sit down and really talk, not on a

The journey to Nuremberg was the fourth seminar of its kind, sponsored by a program that originated when the dean of the University of Notre Dame asked Betty Signer to utilize her background in social justice, tolerance, and healing to create a conference that would help educate the community about the *Shoah*. Around the same time, her husband, Rabbi Michael A. Signer, C’70 and Abrams Professor of Jewish Thought and Culture in the Department of Theology at Notre Dame, was asked by a priest, who served as a liaison for reconciliation between the German and Polish community, to invite his American Catholic students to join this dialogue. With his wife’s project fresh on his mind, Rabbi Signer suggested to the priest that he add another component: an American Jewish presence. As a result, Betty Signer’s Holocaust education conference was transformed into a seven-day, international, inter-religious seminar, for graduate students and seminarians from America and Europe, to introduce future teachers of theology to issues of Jewish-Christian dialogue.

As co-chair of the Joint Commission on Inter-religious Affairs of the Reform Movement since 1998 and as a member of HUC-JIR’s faculty for over twenty years before moving to Notre Dame, it was a natural choice for Rabbi Signer to invite HUC-JIR to participate as the Jewish voice at the onset of this program in 1999. Past participants from HUC-JIR have included Dr. Lewis Barth, Dr. Adam Rubin, Rabbi Carey Brown (N ’05), Yuri Hronsky (MAJE & MAJCS ’01), and Rabbi Jeff Garroway (C ’03).

The first two seminars were held at the Center for Dialogue and Prayer in Poland, where students of different faiths visited Auschwitz together. The third seminar took place at the Pontifical Academy of Theology in Krakow, Poland, where the city was studied as the historical backdrop. Next year’s seminar is being planned for Lublin, Poland. The organizers hope to continue these dialogues, extend the list of participants, and one day hold a conference in Jerusalem. **HUC-JIR students are encouraged to participate in the 2007 Interfaith Journey to Lublin, Poland. Please contact Rabbi Michael Signer, msigner@nd.edu or 574-631-7635.**

superficial basis, they get to what needs to be said or the beginning of what needs to be talked about,” explains Betty Signer.

Rebecca Milder found that “students of each faith had a significant role to play in the dialogue – dealing with their own perspective of memory, reconciliation, and achieving a measure of equanimity with a past linked with each other.” Dara Frimmer, in the midst of working on her rabbinical thesis on the topic of memory and identity, noted, “a conference like this gave us a chance to use dialogue and relationship-building to mediate tension between past and present.”

Rabbi Mira Regev added an Israeli perspective to the trip. She said that she was compelled to attend this conference “because it was not only a religious experience; it was more about finding a way to live together through cultural dialogue.” This journey enriched her thinking about

Jewish-Muslim relations, in the context of the struggle for a peaceful resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The faculty on the trip provided valuable role modeling and served as a resource for the participants. Dr. Amir’s work with inter-religious dialogue in Germany for the past twelve years played a significant part in the planning of the Nuremberg trip. Moreover, he served not only as a consultant and advisor to the Jewish students for the Jewish components of the conference; his expertise was also sought out by the Catholic students. One of these students, whose interest centered on modern Jewish-Catholic theology, was able to speak with German and Polish experts as well as with Dr. Amir, an expert on Franz Rosenzweig and other Jewish philosophers.

Each morning began with a prayer service led by one of the religious denominations in the

group. “The majority of the participants had never interacted with Jews before,” notes Rabbi Mira Regev. “During our *Kabalat Shabbat* services, it was the first time that many of the other seminar group members had seen a woman leading prayers.”

Even time spent on the bus served as an opportunity for the participants to share in each other’s customs. On the way to *Shabbat* dinner, the HUC-JIR students taught *nigunim*, melodies without words, to the rest of the group and, in turn, were taught Christian Brotherhood songs.

As part of the *Shabbat* morning program, the Torah study session discussed the excerpt from the weekly portion, *Ki Tetze* (Deuteronomy 22:8): “When you build a new house, you shall make a parapet for your roof, so that you do not bring blood-guilt on your house if anyone

(continued on page 42)

Mission to Berlin: Connecting with German Jewry Today

Abigail Fleishman, MAJCS/MPA '03, and Michael Jeser, MAJCS/MSW '04

Eleven School of Jewish Communal Service (SJCS) alumni — Rachel Chertkoff, Doreen Klee, Devorah Servi, Ellen Goldsmith, Sheri Vinnecour, Julie Harris, Deborah Mobile, Abigail Fleishman, Stacy Walter, Michael Jeser, and Larry Nathan, accompanied Dr. Steven F. Windmueller, SJCS Director, on a mission to Germany, December 8-15, 2005. While in Berlin, the group visited key Jewish cultural and religious sites, met with over twenty German Jewish community leaders, and provided training in Jewish communal best practices in the areas of youth and adult programming, supervision, board development, and volunteer engagement and retention. As German Jewry seeks to build Jewish communal institutions, these alumni imparted organizational insights and professional skills to their German counterparts. Abigail Fleishman and Michael Jeser report on this meaningful journey.

For one week in early December, eleven alumni of the School of Jewish Communal Service participated in a mission to a most unlikely Jewish place: Berlin. Hosted by the German-based foundation, A Bridge of Understanding, the trip was intended to challenge the conceptions that North American Jews have of contemporary Germany and German people, as well as to familiarize us with some of the challenges and opportunities facing the rapidly growing German Jewish community.

For so many North American Jews, Germany is the symbol of all that is anti-Semitic in our collective history. For decades, many North American Jews were raised with the idea that we should not support the German economy by buying German cars and other German products. Certainly, for the majority of North American Jewry, Germany has not ranked high on our list of places to visit.

However, as we learned on this visit, Germany now hosts one of the fastest-growing Jewish communities in the world, with most of the immigrants coming from the Former Soviet Union. Somewhat ironically, despite the growing anti-Semitism in Europe, Germany is probably one of the safest places for this emerging

Jewish community. The complexity of the situation of contemporary Germany is not exactly what most of us expected. What we found was a generation of Germans who are struggling to reconcile the murderous legacy of their past with a strong desire to move on in an honest way with their future.

Evidence of Jewish Growth

Since the fall of Communism and the Berlin Wall in the late 1980s, the Jewish population in Germany has grown from just over 30,000 to over 100,000 Jews, with most individuals

coming from the Former Soviet Union. There are likely an additional 70,000 – 100,000 Jews who have not registered as such and are thus not counted in the official census of German Jewry. What differentiates these varying statistics is the ‘Who is a Jew?’ question. Because the German government follows the same criteria as the Israeli government by recognizing Jews as those who have Jewish mothers, the German Jewish communities fail to recognize the additional 70,000 – 100,000 Jews who are not *halakhically* Jewish.

Whichever definition one follows, these Jews have settled all over the country and have had to face the challenges of unemployment, learning the language, and trying to acclimate into Jewish life with minimal or no previous experience and limited resources. They have received little assistance from other Diaspora communities, in part due to the stigma of being a Jewish community in Germany. With this basic understanding of how German Jews are identified, we were better able to understand the daily encounters and interactions experienced throughout our seminar.

Reflections on Our Experiences

Our second day in Berlin coincided with *Shabbat*. We attended services at the New Synagogue of Berlin that seemed to follow a pattern of their



Dr. Steven Windmueller and alumni of the School of Jewish Communal Service at the Bundestag (German Parliament) during the group's day-long briefing with political leaders.

own: separate seating, a choir, the liturgy mostly in Hebrew, the sermon delivered in German by an American Orthodox Rabbi who used a microphone. We were surprised to find the sanctuary filled with young people and children.

After services, we dined at the Jewish community center with our 'Shabbat buddies,' five young German Jews from different parts of the country who had come to spend time with us and tell us about what it is like for young people in their country to engage in Jewish life. They were excited to share their ideas with us, to describe the vitality of their communities, and to demonstrate their interest in supporting Israel. It was incredibly moving to connect to our Jewish peers in this way and we hope to maintain some of these connections through our own professional work.

Throughout the week, our group met with interesting individuals, each representing another piece of this complex German puzzle. We had lunch with *The New York Times* Berlin correspondent and spent an afternoon at the offices of the American Jewish Committee. We visited a Jewish day school, where we met several students who chose to attend the school even though they were themselves not Jewish.

One of our most memorable evenings was spent with Cornelia Schmalz-Jacobson, the daughter of parents who were both awarded the title of righteous gentiles by Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust authority and memorial museum. Her parents were responsible for saving the lives of several hundred young Polish Jewish women by finding them employment as housekeepers in the homes of their friends, family, and colleagues. Ms. Shmalz-Jacobson, having served in the German Parliament as the federal commissioner for foreign residents, is an active member in countless organizations devoted to Jewish and Holocaust survivor-specific causes. Meeting her was a reminder



The recently dedicated Holocaust Memorial, designed by American architect Peter Eisenman and located only a short distance from the Brandenburg Gate, the site of Nazi rallies in Berlin during the Shoah.

to our group that not all of Germany's citizens were standing idly by while the Nazi deportations and murders were taking place. While the actions of this family do not represent the actions of the majority, there were others like them, and their altruism cannot be ignored.



The entrance to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp was inscribed by the Nazis to say "Work Shall Make You Free;" the monument in the background was erected by the Soviets to commemorate "all martyrs killed or imprisoned by the National Socialists."

Memorializing the Past

Although the purpose of the trip was not focused on the Holocaust, a component of our trip was devoted to observing the way Germany memorializes the past. Our visit to Sachsenhausen, a concentration camp about one hour outside of Berlin, was a disturbing reminder of the Nazis' attempt to eradicate Europe and the world of the Jewish people. This camp housed thousands of Jews, political dissidents, and other prisoners. Most of what was once there is no longer. Stones have replaced barracks, silence replaces the cries of tortured and emaciated victims, and a somber spirit evokes

the tears of separated family members who would never see each other again. As we walked in our warm down jackets, wool hats and gloves, it was virtually impossible to imagine life as a prisoner during a German winter, standing at roll call for up to twenty-four hours, resulting in bitter frostbite and death, and suffering forced labor and selections for medical experimentation.

Seminar with Jewish Community Leaders

The Zentralrat (Central Committee of Jews in Germany) organized a day of meetings and learning with German Jewish leaders from across the country. Discussions during our opening dinner explored how German Jewish leaders are elected, their particular communities' needs, how communities function, and the issues they face in integrating immigrant Jews.

While there are some similarities between North American and German Jewish communities, we discovered some key differences:

- The American Jewish establishment depends on a strong partnership between professionals and volunteers, whereas German Jewish leadership is primarily volunteer with sporadic components of professional leadership;

(continued on page 42)

When Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise opened the doors to Hebrew Union College in 1875, the first incoming class of rabbinical students consisted of first-generation American Jews as well as Jewish immigrants. Over 130 years later, students from around the world continue to enroll at the College-Institute, so that they can make their contribution to the vitality and future of Jewish communities throughout North America and abroad.

Today, there are over twenty-five international students enrolled in programs across HUC-JIR's three stateside campuses. Their experiences with Progressive Judaism in their home countries or their exposure to North American Reform Judaism have led them to pursue professional training at HUC-JIR. Upon graduation, ordination, and investiture, they will either return to their home countries and serve the Progressive Jewish communities there, or serve North American Jewry as Reform Jewish leaders.

Students from the former Soviet Union, Israel, France, Canada, Iran, the United Kingdom, Uganda, and Nigeria, to name a few, have sought out HUC-JIR's programs. "Over the years, we have had international students enrolled in the rabbinical, cantorial, education, and the Doctor of Ministry programs," explains Rabbi Shirley Idelson, Associate Dean and Director of the Rabbinical program at HUC-JIR/New York. "They invariably bring fresh perspectives and unique experiences that add depth to classroom discussions and enrich our student body."

Daniel Mickelberg, a third-year rabbinical student at HUC-JIR/Cincinnati who hails from Vancouver, British Columbia, finds that HUC-JIR "is a tremendous learning opportunity to pursue my studies in the American environment. The school truly integrates flavors from across the continent as well as around the world. The multicultural



atmosphere is very refreshing." In addition to their diversity, some international students bring to HUC-JIR their prior professional training in the fields of journalism, engineering, music, and business.

The admissions office ensures that prospective students fulfill specific requirements for acceptance. In addition to the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service's requirements for students to attain visas, all non-native English speakers are required to pass the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) to demonstrate written, verbal, spoken and comprehensive English skills on a graduate level. Foreign applicants must also take the GRE's and adhere to the same guidelines that American students follow for admission and fulfillment of degree requirements, including the Year-in-Israel program at the Jerusalem campus for the rabbinical, cantorial, and education programs.

Zöe Jacobs's journey from England to the School of Sacred Music in New York first began when she organized a youth choir in her own congregation in London, which had no cantor – a clergy role with which she was wholly unfamiliar. At that time, a lay leader associated with the Reform Synagogue Movement of Great Britain recognized Zöe's talent and drive and put her in touch with Kutz Camp and the North American Reform Movement.

"It was Cantor Ellen Dreskin and the students from HUC-JIR with whom I worked who inspired me to think about a future as a cantor and reinforced what I wanted to do with my life," recalls Jacobs. In order to prepare herself for admission to the cantorial program, Jacobs

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS EXTEND HUC-JIR'S GLOBAL REACH

Rachel Litcofsky



(top) British cantorial student Zöe Jacobs.

(left) Italian graduate student Vadim Putzo (back row, at right) joins classmates Nicholas Petersen, Jennifer Quast, Greg Snyder, Grant Testut, Michael Cernucan, and Wendy and Adam McCollum on a night out in Cincinnati.

spent a post-university year in her self-styled *mechinah* program in Israel, studying Hebrew and refining her voice skills. Now a second-year cantorial student, she is determined to return to London after investiture and to become England's first Reform Cantor.

Vadim Putzu, a Ph.D. candidate in Jewish Philosophy and Mysticism came to HUC-JIR/Cincinnati from Turin, Italy. Back home, he had few choices in the field of higher Jewish studies, with few programs, no funding, and little opportunity for developing scholarly skills and for pursuing an academic career. He was attracted to HUC-JIR by its reputation as a Jewish center of academic excellence, well known among scholars for its steadfast commitment to rigorous research as reflected in the *Hebrew Union College Annual*, an international forum for scholarly research in all areas of Judaic, Biblical, and Semitic studies. "With HUC-JIR's excellent learning resources," explains Putzu, "I am well on my way to become a scholar. My linguistic, didactical, and research skills have greatly improved since I've been in the program." He plans to transmit the learning he has received to the younger generations of Italian Jews in his home community. His goals are echoed by classmate Jin Gong, who came to HUC-JIR from China to pursue her degree in American Jewish History and has amplified her research with Yiddish music and culture studies.

The move to the United States from across the world is not without challenges. Gersh Lazarow, a third-year rabbinical student at HUC-JIR/Los Angeles, came to HUC-JIR from Melbourne, Australia. His participation in the Reform Movement's youth groups and summer camps back home helped shape his religious and cultural identity. While living on a *kibbutz* and studying in Jerusalem, he came into contact with HUC-JIR's students and faculty, which led to his entering the rabbinical program. Lazarow views the academic and professional education that he is receiving as crucial to his leadership training. He acknowledges, however, that "those considering the program from abroad should recognize that you are stepping into a culture that struggles with recognizing diversity. It was a larger adjustment going to America than it was to Israel."



The international students at HUC-JIR/Los Angeles display their national pride: (from left) Rogerio Z. Cukierman, Karin C. Zingerevitz, Adrian Breitfeld, Sabine Meyer, Daniel Mickelberg, and Gersh Lazarow.

To help with the cultural transition, there are numerous opportunities available to these students. "I have thrown myself into as many Union for Reform Judaism (URJ) experiences as possible," explains Rachel Gurevitz, a fifth-year rabbinical student at HUC-JIR in New York from London. "I want to be able to be a part of the culture here and to understand the issues and the direction of North American Reform Judaism." Some foreign students choose to work as Jewish educators and song leaders, lending their professional experience to Reform Movement summer camps throughout the United States. Others find fulfillment as chaplains or student rabbis in congregations around the country. All of these experiences filter into their formation as future leaders of the Reform Movement worldwide.

While serving as a youth director in a Conservative synagogue in Brazil, Karin C. Zingerevitz came to the realization that she had higher career aspirations and also wanted to be involved with a more liberal Jewish community. "My husband, Rogerio Z. Cukierman, attended the URJ *Kallah* to look into Jewish education opportunities for us in the United States," she recalls. "I found that the Jewish community values a master's degree from the School of Jewish Communal Service (SJCS), which will enable me to work for an organization that focuses on development and community relations in the United States or back in South America."

She is pursuing a dual-degree at the SJCS and the University of Southern California (USC), while her husband is a first-year student pursuing a Master of Arts in Judaic Studies at HUC-JIR.

The School of Jewish Communal Service in recent years has recruited a number of international students and young adults whose families have immigrated to the United States from Argentina, Brazil, Israel, Canada, and South Africa. "Globalism has long been an integral part of this professional discipline," notes Dr. Steven Windmueller, its Director. As part of their studies, they find it beneficial to work in such non-profit environments as Jewish Federations to gain additional skills in planning and fundraising.

Whether they plan to return to their home countries as rabbis, cantors, educators, academics, or Jewish communal professionals, or remain in the United States, these students will have gained insight into North American Reform Judaism through their life-long connections made at HUC-JIR. At the same time, they will have nurtured a greater understanding of Jewish peoplehood among their American classmates.

It has been said that the sun never sets on the graduates of HUC-JIR. These international students extend HUC-JIR's global reach to strengthen the bonds of Progressive Judaism worldwide. ■



THE FIRST NICARAGUAN BAR



There is a Rabbinic saying in *Pirke Avot*: “*Aseh lecha rav, v’kine l’cha haver,*” “Acquire for yourself a teacher, and gain a friend.” These words frame one of the most memorable moments of my early rabbinical career. This year I was granted the privilege of studying and learning with Germán Beer, a 21-year-old student from Managua, Nicaragua, who in August became a *bar mitzvah*.

Nearly one year ago, one of the congregants at Temple Shaaray Tefila in Bedford, NY (where I served as the Rabbinical Intern and am the incoming Assistant Rabbi), called me to share information about his new-found

was excited about the prospect of learning with a man who sees the Jewish world through a very different lens, and who lives in a predominantly Catholic country with only a handful of Jews with whom to share the richness of the Jewish tradition. This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Over the next several months, Germán and I kept in close contact. Weekly lessons over the phone, regular semi-weekly, if not daily e-mail correspondence, as well as informal conversations (all of this in Spanish) were part of our learning experiences together.

Upon my arrival in Managua for this special occasion, I was greeted by Germán, his mother, and a family friend. On the Friday evening before the *bar mitzvah*, we joined in *berachot* and song for an incredible *Shabbat* meal (Nicaraguan style), and took in some much needed *menucha* (rest). On Saturday morning, members of the Temple made their way over to the *simcha* house. The ceremony was unforgettable, as everyone watched this young man chant from the *Torah* and give an inspiring sermon on the *Torah* portion of the week.

Some of the congregants were able to follow along with the Spanish, while others related

MITZVAH IN OVER 50 YEARS

Rabbi Jason Nevarez, N '06, NYSOE '06

friendship with members of the Jewish community in Nicaragua. And yes, there are Jews in Nicaragua – nearly 70 to be exact! He explained that after the Sandanistas took control of the country in the late 1970s, many members of the Jewish community fled the country for fear of discrimination and possible expulsion. It was at that point that the Jewish community was disbanded, the *Torah* scrolls were sent abroad, and the synagogue was closed. No lifecycle events were performed or holidays celebrated. The Jewish community in Nicaragua had essentially been lost.

Although this was only a brief summary of the story the concerned congregant told me, through his words I heard a call to do what I could to help salvage what was left of this community. Gratefully, an opportunity quickly arose.

A young man named Germán, who is part of the Jewish community in Nicaragua, had been engaged in learning and wanted to solidify his commitment to the covenant of his matriarchs and patriarchs by becoming a *bar mitzvah*. I was asked to facilitate his preparation and officiate at the service. I

I was excited about the prospect of learning with a man who sees the Jewish world through a very different lens, and who lives in a predominantly Catholic country with only a handful of Jews with whom to share the richness of the Jewish tradition. This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

through song and celebration. The most memorable moment for me was joining with his sister and mother, as we placed our hands on Germán's shoulders, and recited the *Birkat HaCohanim* over him. With tears of joy in her eyes, Jasmine (*Yehudit*) Beer gave her son a kiss and a hug, sat down, and continued to look on. She radiated a sense of pride and satisfaction, not only for her son's commitment to the sacred covenant, but also for the small Jewish community in Nicaragua, which had just been put back on the map by her family's *simcha*.

The reception followed, complete with a *ruach*-filled *hora*, salsa, meringue, amazing food, and a cake fit for a king. Toasts and roasts (mostly from Germán's friends) abounded, and the atmosphere was joyous.

While I have had the honor to work with many wonderful and talented *b'nai mitzvah* students, and I look forward to working with many, many more in the years ahead, it will be hard to match the feeling of solidarity and sacred covenant that we all experienced that day in that small Central American town. ■

A Talmud in Exile: The Influence of Yerushalmi Avodah Zarah on the Formation of Bavli Avodah Zarah

Alyssa M. Gray, Brown Judaic Studies, Providence, RI, 2005 © 2005 by Brown University

Modern critical Talmudic scholarship has been concerned with the relationship between the two Talmuds (the 7th century Babylonian Talmud, or “Bavli,” and the 4th-5th century Jerusalem Talmud, or “Yerushalmi”) since its inception in the 19th century. Earlier scholars, and those of a traditionalist bent, assumed that the later Bavli knew and relied upon the earlier Yerushalmi. Modern scholars focused on the many differences between the Talmuds and coalesced around the view that the Bavli has no literary relationship at all to the Yerushalmi. They explain the many similarities and shared materials in the two Talmuds as the results of the (most likely) oral transmission of discrete texts between the land of Israel and Babylonia (modern-day Iraq). *A Talmud in Exile* proposes a new and original method for approaching the issue of inter-Talmudic relationship. Drawing on previous scholarship, Dr. Gray studies one Talmudic tractate (*Avodah Zarah*, “idolatry”) in both Talmuds, modeling two levels of analysis: “macro” and “micro.” These analyses, together with historical research, show that, in this case, Bavli *Avodah Zarah* likely knew and relied on its Yerushalmi counterpart. Such studies will ultimately lead us to a new understanding of the origins of the Babylonian Talmud, as is discussed in this excerpt.



Conclusion

Y. *Avodah Zarah* Influenced the Formation of B. *Avodah Zarah*

I recently participated in a conference where I presented a paper related to the thesis of this book, although unrelated to y. and b. *Avodah Zarah* specifically. In the discussion period, a colleague to whose views I always pay careful attention asked me to spell out the larger significance of demonstrating literary dependency between the Talmuds. I think that my colleague’s question is a suitable one to consider as this book draws to a close.

My response must begin with a reiterated caveat. This book has demonstrated only that y. *Avodah Zarah* influenced the formation of b. *Avodah Zarah*, not that the Yerushalmi as a whole influ-

enced the formation of the Bavli as a whole. Thus it would be imprudent to do more than point to what this book *suggests* in the way of larger significance. That said, this book has much to suggest. First, our finding that y. *Avodah Zarah* influenced b. *Avodah Zarah*, especially if this finding is followed up by similar findings from other studies of tractate pairs, suggests that our understanding of the formation of the Bavli may have to change. Without a doubt, the Babylonian Talmud is a remarkable intellectual and cultural achievement, but we may have to stop viewing it as virtually an entirely Babylonian creation. As Martin Jaffee pointed out some years ago, “it is not self-evident . . . that independence of judgment and vision, such as that exercised

by the Bavli in its exegesis of the Mishnah, is incompatible with immersion in traditional processes of learning . . . The Bavli can indeed be ‘original’ while at the same time being largely dependent . . . on an earlier work for its power of originality.” In a related vein, our understanding of the relationship between the two rabbinic centers in the fifth through the seventh centuries may require revision, as we see that large blocks of edited materials drawn from the amoraic learning of the Land of Israel exerted a profound influence on that of Babylonia as late as the sixth or seventh century.

Apropos of this last point, a methodological point is in order. A key finding of this book is that macro analysis – the comparison of each Talmud’s entire

treatment of each mishnah in the tractate under study – is indispensable to forming an accurate picture of the relationship between the tractates. We must begin big, noting the large-scale inter-Talmudic similarities and progressively checking off alternative explanations for them. Only then should we proceed to the step of micro analysis and analyze precisely how the Bavli has reworked specific textual parallels. By analogy, a scientist wishing to explain the apparent hand-in-glove shapes of South America and Africa would be well-advised to begin by studying the forms of the continents rather than by commencing with soil samples in Brazil and Liberia. The time for such soil studies will come; but without the macro analysis of

the structures and contours of the continents, there may be no larger context in which to locate and assess the true significance of the findings of micro analysis. This book also helps us to better understand the intellectual profile of the Bavli redactors. Our work in chapter 2 demonstrates that the redactors appropriated a great deal of material from *y. Avodah Zarah*, and that these appropriations exhibit five tendencies:

B. *Avodah Zarah* appropriated *y. Avodah Zarah sugyot* or sequences of two or more *y. Avodah Zarah sugyot* in the same order as *y. Avodah Zarah* and attached to the same *mishnah*;

B. *Avodah Zarah* built up a complex *sugya* using materials marked as relevant to the issue by *y. Avodah Zarah*;

B. *Avodah Zarah sugyot* tend to resemble their *y. Avodah Zarah* parallels more closely than parallels in other rabbinic compilations;

B. *Avodah Zarah* placed materials at points in the tractate similar to where *y. Avodah Zarah* placed them; and

B. *Avodah Zarah* sometimes used the same *mishnah* as *y. Avodah Zarah* as the opportunity to present similar genres of material.

The common feature of these five tendencies is that b. *Avodah Zarah* is demonstrably closer to *y. Avodah Zarah* than to other rabbinic compilations. This suggests both that the b. *Avodah Zarah* redactors had the tractate in some form and that they felt it appropriate to build their own work upon it.

The redactors remained *close*, but did not subordinate their own tractate entirely to *y. Avodah Zarah*. In chapters 3 and 4 we learned more about them; they revised and reworked their prior sources in characteristic ways. They tended to add Babylonian linguistic, cultural,

and/or halakhic features to *y. Avodah Zarah sugyot*, they tended to leave out of b. *Avodah Zarah* materials found in *y. Avodah Zarah* that were of particular relevance to the Land of Israel, they re-arranged prior materials in a more sensible order, and they reworked their *sugyot* to exhibit a higher level of legal conceptualization than we see in *y. Avodah Zarah*. The redactors' creative appropriation of *y. Avodah Zarah* shows that they viewed themselves as authorized to interject their own contributions into the received heritage, even to the extent of rewriting vigorously. Similarly, we saw in chapter 4 that these creative redactors sometimes answered questions left unresolved in *y. Avodah Zarah*, or took up their own deliberations at the point where *y. Avodah Zarah* left off. The redactors were thus creative and proactive; they did not simply leave us with a thin layer of redactional "icing" on the "cake" baked by the *amoraim*. To continue this

metaphor, the redactors of the Bavli "baked the cake" using a modified version of *y. Avodah Zarah's* "recipe"—they revised it in light of their own cultural and other concerns.

For over 1,000 years, the Babylonian Talmud has been the focus of intense and devoted scrutiny as well as the fountainhead of the classical *halakhah*. The Yerushalmi, although never entirely neglected, was relegated by the jurisprudence of *geonim* and *rishonim* to a secondary and subordinate status. This book has demonstrated that, with regard to b. and *y. Avodah Zarah*, we can discern the fingerprints of *y. Avodah Zarah* – not simply Palestinian learning generally – in the formation of b. *Avodah Zarah*. Whoever the scholars were that brought *y. Avodah Zarah* to Babylonia, their contribution to the making of the Bavli, and, by extension, to the formation of Judaism in the Middle Ages, is at once shrouded in mystery and of inestimable value.

Alyssa Gray, J.D., Ph.D.

Alyssa Gray, J.D., Ph.D., is Assistant Professor of Codes and Responsa Literature at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in New York. She received her Ph.D. in Talmud and Rabbinics from the Jewish Theological

Seminary (2001), and also holds an LL.M. in *Mishpat Ivri* (Jewish Law) from the Hebrew University Faculty of Law (1994). Prior to pursuing her advanced studies in rabbinics, she was associated with Davis Polk & Wardwell, where she practiced law as a commercial litigator. She graduated from Barnard College (*magna cum laude*; Phi Beta Kappa, 1984), the Jewish Theological Seminary (Seminary College, now List College, 1984), and the Columbia University School of Law (1987). Gray has written on a number of topics, notably martyrdom in the Palestinian Talmud, the redactions of the Babylonian and Palestinian Talmuds, the relationship of *halakhah* and law, treatments of sexuality in the Babylonian Talmud and medieval *halakhic* works, and the codification of laws on poverty in the *Shulhan Arukh*. Her interests include the history and development of Talmudic literature, the history of the *halakhah*, and Jewish law and contemporary legal theory. She has been invited to speak in a variety of academic and non-academic settings, including Yale University, the University of Chicago, Florida Atlantic University, the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the Freehof Institute for Progressive Halakhah, and the Union for Reform Judaism, as well as numerous synagogue settings. She is currently working on a book about wealth and poverty in classical rabbinic literature.

NELSON GLUECK

BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGIST AND PRESIDENT OF HUC-JIR

Jonathan M. Brown and Laurence Kutler
Hebrew Union College Press (2006)

This book recounts the extraordinary achievements of the 4th President of Hebrew Union College and one of the pioneering biblical archaeologists of the 20th century, who was affectionately known in the nascent State of Israel as 'Ha-Professor.' Glueck's life's work encompassed excavating remains of the ancient Nabataean civilization in Transjordan and demonstrating how the Negev could actually support a large population if proper irrigation were used (helping fulfill Ben Gurion's dream of Jewish settlement in that area). He expanded the Cincinnati-based HUC through the merger with Rabbi Stephen S. Wise's Jewish Institute of Religion in New York and the creation of new campuses and academic programs in Los Angeles and Jerusalem. These photos and excerpts illuminate a career that shaped the destiny of American Reform Judaism and the State of Israel.

Upon Glueck's first sighting of the mound that recently had been identified as King Solomon's ancient seaport on the Red Sea, during his mid-1930s expedition as head of the American Schools of Oriental Research in Jerusalem:

I shall never forget the day we came to the crest of the inconspicuous watershed near the southern end of the Wadi Arabah, and saw the deep blue tongue of the Gulf of Aqabah ahead of us... Our camels, sniffing the moisture in the air and anticipating the sweet water they must have sensed awaited them, quickened their pace and soon broke into a steady run. Our weariness suddenly vanished. At this juncture of the continents of Asia and Africa, the boundaries of Arabia, Transjordan, Palestine, and Sinai touch the northern end of the gulf, with parts of all them becoming visible to us. This was the scene that had presented itself to the people of the Exodus. We were racing forward into the past. And soon we reached the water's edge, near which Etzion-geber had once stood.

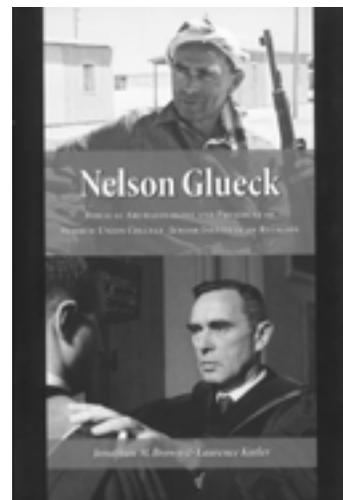


Glueck was known to carry a Bible with him on his explorations and to read aloud to his guides, staff, and volunteers about the areas they were exploring and the sites they had found:

The archaeologist's efforts are not directed at proving the correctness of the Bible, which is neither necessary nor possible, any more than belief in God can be scientifically demonstrated. It is quite the other way around. The historical clues in the Bible can lead the archaeologist to a knowledge of the civilization of the ancient world in which the Bible developed and with whose religious practices and concepts the Bible so radically differs. It can be regarded in effect as an almost infallible divining rod, revealing to the expert the whereabouts and characteristics of lost cities and civilizations.

After war was declared against Japan on December 8, 1941, Glueck offered his services to the U.S. government. By May 1942 he was on his way to the Middle East as an operative for the Office of Strategic Services with the code name of "Bill." Glueck suspected that the Nazis had also sent archaeologists as undercover agents into Egypt before the battle of El Alamein to

Glueck with Glubb Pasha and two Arab tribesmen during World War II. When he traveled with the Arabs, he wore a keffiyeh and rode camelback as they did. He also enjoyed the romantic image he thus conveyed as a Jewish 'Lawrence of Arabia,' which was depicted years later on the December 13, 1963 cover of TIME magazine. His archaeological discoveries gave the Jews of the yishuv (pre-statehood Eretz-Israel) a powerful hold on its historical relationship with the land, an awareness of the rich mineral resources beneath the barren desert, and the possibility of harnessing the scanty rainwater of the Negev for agricultural development and population settlement.



plant caches of gasoline and other supplies for the Wehrmacht. Brown and Kutler describe Glueck's role:

It was in anticipation of the climactic battle of El Alamein (in North Africa) that Glueck was assigned to survey the Sinai peninsula, the Negev, and Transjordan and to locate ancient roads and available supplies of fresh water, in case the British [led by General Montgomery] would lose the battle [against General Rommel's German forces] and be forced to retreat eastward. The troops would have had to escape through the Sinai and the Wadi el-Arish (the biblical Brook of Egypt) into Palestine, and perhaps further. He was to map every trail, every spring, every cistern, and every unusual formation that would be of help in such a retreat. Glueck certainly knew the topography of that part of the world, including where water for thirsty troops could be found. Since it is axiomatic among archaeologists that settlements could only be built where an adequate supply of water was available, either by continual flow, by digging wells, or by capturing rain water in cisterns, his knowledge of Patriarchal, Roman, Nabataean, and Byzantine settlements in the area was crucial... Four decades later, Helen [Glueck], reflecting on her husband's wartime activities, recalled: 'He often told me how grateful he was that his plans were never utilized.'

Urged to assume the Presidency of HUC by Iphigene Sulzberger, the granddaughter of Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, and by Rabbi Judah Leon Magnes, founder and Chancellor of The Hebrew University, Glueck recalled a wartime journey aboard a troop transport that helped him make up his mind:

It was crowded with young men, all of them ready to make the supreme sacrifice for their country. For weeks I lived with them and shared their thoughts. I realized more than ever the need for religion... I decided that I could do more good teaching eternal laws, which, if understood and followed, would do away with future wars. And I know of no better place to teach those laws than in an institution such as the Hebrew Union College.

In his first address to the College community as its President in October 1947, Glueck recalled his own rabbinical education a quarter of a century earlier and spoke of the requisite qualities of the American Reform rabbi:



Glueck was invited to present the benediction at the inauguration of John F. Kennedy on January 20, 1961.



Glueck with (from left) Lester A. Jaffe, Chair of the Board of Governors and its Presidential Search Committee; Iphigene Sulzberger, who championed Glueck's candidacy; and Dr. Julian Morgenstern, Glueck's predecessor as HUC President (right).

The modern rabbi requires not only the authority and inspiration of Jewish lore, with its indispensable discipline, but also the insights and techniques of the growing science of human relationships. He must know himself and be serene in his own soul, and be full of integrity and humility before he can guide others to clarity of mind, quietness of heart, and the quickening of human sensibilities.

After the establishment of the State of Israel, Glueck sought to create an institution comparable to the American Schools of Oriental Research in East Jerusalem, no longer accessible to Jewish archaeologists, and to establish a Jerusalem address for Reform rabbis and rabbinical students. The Jerusalem campus included the Murstein Chapel, the first Reform synagogue in Israel, which had been vigorously opposed by the Israeli Orthodox establishment and which Glueck defended at the dedication ceremony on July 7, 1963:

We have no desire, nor do we intend, to 'missionize,' but in all candor, we do believe that authoritarian concepts and controls of any kind, and especially in the area of full religious expression, are foreign to everything that Jewry and Judaism and Israel stand for. There are many facets to religious truth and many ways to express it – and, with the deepest respect for all other forms of Jewish religious orientation and devotion, we shall hold our own kind of religious services, and strive to achieve untrammelled freedom to practice Judaism in every aspect of our lives.

Copies of this book will be distributed to all HUC-JIR alumni, faculty, Governors, Overseers, students, URJ congregations, and biblical archaeology faculty at selected universities through the generosity of Richard J. Scheuer, former Chair of the Board of Governors, who was Nelson Glueck's good friend.

Rabbi David H. Aaron, Ph.D., *Etched in Stone: The Emergence of the Decalogue* (T & T Clark Publishing). Examining the question of when the Decalogue versions were written and why, utilizing a variety of critical methods and literary approaches that have heretofore been under-explored. The main focus of this book is the literary phenomenon known as "the tablets" and how it functioned within the broader narrative. Aaron argues not only that the inclusion of the Decalogue texts was quite late in the development of the Pentateuch's canon, but that their integration preserves vestiges of highly charged ideological conflicts that were inadvertently neutralized by the rather bland and generic ethical precepts coined among its verses.

Dr. Eugene B. Borowitz, *The Talmud's Theological Language-Game, a Philosophical Discourse Analysis* (Jewish Philosophy Series for the State University of New York Press). All later Judaism is based upon rabbinic teaching, most authoritatively presented in the Babylonian Talmud. This work intermingles two forms of rabbinic discourse, the one required – *halakhah* (essentially law) – and the other only highly commended – *aggadah* (anything that's not *halakhah*). Statements about Jewish belief are *aggadah* and therefore exhibit a notorious liberty of content and expression. This has given rise to the vexing problem of the logic which gives the *aggadah* its integrity and holds its diverse content together. This book seeks to resolve that quandary.

Jonathan Brown and Laurence Kutler, *Nelson Glueck: Biblical Archaeologist and President of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion* (HUC Press, 2005). A documentation of Nelson Glueck's achievements and journey in the land of the Bible and 20th-century American Reform Judaism (see pages 38-39).

Dr. Edward Goldman and Dr. Richard S. Sarason, eds., *Hebrew Union College Annual*, Vol. 75. This volume of 11 scholarly articles that focus on all areas of Judaic, biblical, and semitic studies includes **Dr. Dvora E.**

Weisberg's article, "Desirable But Dangerous: Rabbis' Daughters in the Babylonian Talmud."

Dr. Alyssa Gray, *A Talmud in Exile: The Influence of Yerushalmi Avodah Zarah on the Formation of Bavli Avodah Zarah* (Brown University, 2005). Arguing that the redactors of tractate Avodah Zarah of the Babylonian Talmud knew and relied upon the earlier tractate Avodah Zarah of the Jerusalem Talmud, this book builds its case by examining the structure and organization of the two tractsates overall, as well as by analyzing specific textual parallels (see page 36).

Dr. Joel Hoffman, *In the Beginning: A Short History of the Hebrew Language* (paperback edition, NYU Press). A study of the history of Hebrew, illuminating how the written Hebrew record has survived, explaining the significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls and ancient translations, and analyzing clues about how the words of the Bible were actually pronounced.

Dr. Lawrence A. Hoffman, ed., *Rethinking Synagogues: A New Vocabulary For Congregational Life* (Jewish Lights Publishing, forthcoming Summer 2006). A retrospective on what has been learned during ten years of Synagogue 2000's work with close to 100 synagogues across all movements. Drawing on Jewish sources and the secular disciplines of philosophy, sociology, and economics, it provides a new way to think about synagogue life and offers activities and topics for conversation to engage synagogue boards and committees.

Professor Sara S. Lee and Mary C. Boys, *In the Presence of the Other* (Jewish Lights Publishing). An instructive look at pioneering efforts to heal religious conflict through inter-religious education, this book explores the friendship and working relationship that developed between the authors and their shared goal to prepare educational leaders in their communities to address the issues dividing Jews and Christians.

Professor Sara S. Lee and Nancy Prager Levin, *Bridging the Gap: The Power of Mentoring for Creating Teaching Excellence in Congregational Education, A Practical Guidebook for Congregational Educators* (The Rhea Hirsh School of Education, Summer 2006). Based on a pilot project, the guidebook provides a plan for congregational educators who wish to establish and support a mentoring program at their schools.

Dr. Dalia Marx, Tamar Duvdevani, Maya Leibovich, Alona Lisitsa, eds., *Parashat Mayim* (Forthcoming 2006). A compilation of Hebrew liturgical texts, both old and new, to be used for *twilah* (ritual immersion) to enable men and women to cleanse their bodies, hearts, and souls before holidays and joyous occasions and at times of loss, violence, and spiritual need.

Jean Bloch Rosensaft, ed., *Carol Hamoy: Psalm Song* (HUC-JIR Museum, 2005). Exhibition catalogue includes essays by E.M. Broner, **Rachel Gurevitz (NY '06)**, **Laura Kruger**, and **Michele Prince**.

Jean Bloch Rosensaft, ed., *Maty Grünberg, Selected Works 1966-2006* (HUC-JIR Museum, 2006). Exhibition catalogue includes essays by **Laura Kruger**, Natan Zach, and Menashe Kadishman.

Dr. Michael Zeldin, ed., *Journal of Jewish Education*, Vol. 72, no. 1 (Routledge, a Taylor & Francis Group). An interdisciplinary forum on research and scholarly issues in Jewish education, including curriculum and instruction, teacher preparation, Jewish identity development, history and philosophy of Jewish education, and the linkage between Jewish and general education.

Rabbi Gary P. Zola and Michael M. Lorge eds., *A Place of Our Own: The Rise of Reform Jewish Camping* (The University of Alabama Press). Commemorating the 50th anniversary of the founding of the first Reform Jewish educational camp in the United States (Olin-Sang-Ruby Union Institute, in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin), with essays by Donald M. Splansky, **Michael Zeldin**, and Jonathan D. Sarna.

Recent Faculty Articles of Note

Dr. Isa Aron, Sara Lee, and Dr. Michael Zeldin, "Contemporary Jewish Education" in Dana Kaplan ed., *The Cambridge Companion To American Judaism* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 2005): 145-168.

Rabbi Carole Balin, Ph.D., "The Call to Serve: Jewish Women Medical Students in Russia, 1872-1887" in *Polin*, Vol. 18 (special issue devoted to Jewish Women in Eastern Europe), 2005: 133-152.

Dr. Sarah Bunim Benor and Bernard Spolsky, "Jewish Languages" in Keith Brown, ed., *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*, 2nd edition. Vol. 6. (Oxford: Elsevier, 2006).

Dr. Sarah Bunim Benor and Roger Levy, "The Chicken or the Egg? A Probabilistic Analysis of English Binomials" in *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*, 82.2 (June 2006): 120-124.

Dr. Steven M. Cohen and Ari Y. Kelman, "Cultural Events and Jewish Identities: Young Adult Jews in New York," National Foundation for Jewish Culture (Spring 2006).

Dr. Tamara Cohn Eskenazi, "Implications for and from Ezra-Nehemiah" in Gary N. Knoppers, ed., *Conversation with W. M. Schniedewind, How the Bible Became a Book: The Textualization of Ancient Israel* (*Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 5, 2005).

Dr. Michael J. Cook, "Paul's Argument in Romans 9-11" in *Review and Expositor*, Vol. 103, Winter 2006: 91-112.

Dr. Alyssa Gray, "The Ministering Angels Told Me: Bavli Nedarim 20a-b and Its Medieval Interpreters" in Walter Jacob and Moshe Zemer, eds., *Sexual Issues in Jewish Law: Essays and Responsa* (Pittsburgh: Rodef Shalom Press, 2006): 31-81.

Dr. Yosi Leshem, "The Victory Song, Saul has smitten his thousands and David his ten thousands," (I Sam. 18:7) in *Beit Mikra*, (Spring 2005).

Rabbi Michael A. Meyer, "Liberal Judaism in Nazi Germany" in Moshe Zimmermann, ed., *Three Generations of Historians on*

Germans and Jews under The Nazi Regime (Spring 2006).

Dr. Philip E. Miller, "Rabbi Louis I. Newman" in *Rhode Island Jewish Historical Notes*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (November 2005): 444-454.

Dr. Stanley Nash, translation and commentary of "Qotso shel Yod" by Y.K. Gordon in *CCAR Journal* (Summer 2006).

Dr. Adam Rubin, "Hebrew Folklore and the Problem of Exile" in *Modern Judaism*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (February 2005).

Dr. Adam Rubin, "Jewish Nationalism and the Encyclopedic Imagination: The Failure (and Success) of Ahad Ha'am's Otsar Ha-Yahadut" in *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 3 (November 2004).

Dr. Richard Sarason, A new introduction to a reprint by Joseph Heinemann and Jakob J. Petuchowski in *Literature of the Synagogue* (Gorgias Press, Spring 2006).

Cantor Benjie Ellen Schiller, "The Cantor's Spiritual Challenge: Defining 'Agency' in Prayer" in *Journal of Synagogue Music* (Fall 2005).

Dr. Dvora E. Weisberg, "Desirable But Dangerous: Rabbis' Daughters in the Bavli" in *Hebrew Union College Annual*, Vol. 75 (Summer 2006).

Rabbi Nancy H. Wiener, "Caring for Those Whose Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Vary" in Jack H. Bloom, ed., *Jewish Relational Care A-Z*, (Spring 2006).

Books may be purchased at the
HUC-JIR College Bookstore -
(513) 221-4651,
by contacting the publisher
directly, or by visiting our Faculty,
Administration, HUC Press,
and HUC Annual web pages at
www.huc.edu

In Memoriam

Andrea Bronfman, beloved friend of the College-Institute, together with her husband, Charles, whose dedication to the family of the Jewish people has made her an inspiring example of Jewish leadership. Her commitment to the State of Israel and Jewish survival has been manifested in her personal and professional commitments throughout her life.

James O. Freedman, esteemed colleague, honored as the first Life-time Governor Emeritus in recognition of his care and concern for HUC-JIR and the Jewish people and all that he had achieved in his most extraordinary career.

Mike Grossman, dedicated member of the New York Board of Overseers, whose devotion to Jewish education and professional leadership endures as a source of inspiration.

Arthur Hertzberg, honorary alumnus of the College-Institute, whose visionary legacy as a renowned university professor, historian, and distinguished spokesperson for the Jewish people will endure. Dr. Hertzberg's Inaugural Dr. Fritz Bamberger Memorial Lecture is excerpted in *The Chronicle* 2005/Issue 65 at: www.huc.edu/chronicle/65



- "B'Chol Makom," a composition for cantor, choir and piano, commissioned for a special service in honor of Rabbi Sally Priesand's retirement (March 2006).
- "Mi Maamikim," a capella choral work, commissioned by Dr. Abba Borowich for the Zamir Chorale of New York, premiered in Merkin Hall (March 2005).
- "Zeh Hayom This is the Day," a composition for solo, choir and piano, commissioned by Cantor Fredda Mendelson (2005).

Journey to Nuremberg:

Memory and Reconciliation after the Holocaust

(continued from page 29)

should fall from it.” As a group, they reflected on this text and its teachings about responsibility to act and to protect the lives of others.

The HUC-JIR contingent acknowledges the indelible impression this journey has made on their individual identities and aspirations as Jewish leaders. Rebecca Milder recognizes how powerfully her rabbinical sermons and teaching will be influenced by this experience. “I have a much more complex picture of the tragedy of the Holocaust with which to educate the Jewish community.”

Rabbi Mira Regev is applying her experiences to her work as an educator in Haifa, a city known for its diverse population of Jews and Muslims living together. “We cannot stay or survive in our own little world. This type of dialogue is an opportunity to look at what we are doing now to help with the healing process so we can all live in today’s reality.”

Dara Frimmer values the opportunity to “examine the concepts of responsibility and accountability during the week of study and dialogue.” She plans to continue her role in interfaith dialogue through email, networking, and building upon these contacts so that she can incorporate these themes into her own rabbinate.

As for Adam Allenberg, he plans to get involved with an initiative his congregation has with a neighboring church. In addition, while working at a synagogue day school he sees yet another opportunity to continue to participate in interfaith dialogue with the local Catholic day schools. “I now see Jewish survival in a broader context,” he explains. “I feel a greater sense of how we are to play a role in the greater world outside of the Jewish community.” ■

Mission to Berlin:

Connecting with German Jewry Today

(continued from page 31)

- Virtually 100% of German Jewish community functions are funded by the government, while most American Jewish institutions depend on private philanthropy;
- There are over five million American Jews compared to just over 100,000 members of German Jewish communities, which clearly results in a dramatically smaller pool of people with whom to work.

The next day we were divided into small groups and asked to present to the German Jewish leadership the best practices in leadership development, programming, supervision, and volunteer recruitment. At the end of the day-long seminar, our group shared our experiences and reflected on the thoughtful questions raised by our German counterparts and their sincere willingness to learn from our experiences as well as their challenge of our assumptions of how German Jewish communities ought to function.

We came to some conclusions:

- They have virtually no funds to pay professionals to do the work that we do in North America;
- They lack resources to pay for basic staples of Jewish ritual practice, such as *menorot*, *sifrie Torah*, *mezuzot*, and other Jewish ceremonial objects;
- The elected Jewish leadership lacks Jewish training; it appeared that the training we provided was useful to them and encouraged them to think in ways they might not have considered prior to our meeting.

Closing Thoughts

With its history, it is simply amazing that there is a German Jewish community at all. Those with whom we met inspired us to think about how we in North America can recognize and appreciate German Jewry’s unique needs and struggles.

Deborah Mohile, MAJCS/MPA ’94, pointed out to our group that Jews in Germany “have become the *de facto* keepers of the oral, physical, and spiritual history of the Jewish community in Germany.” For many of us, this observation had profound impact. Though the Nazis may have imagined a land that would some day be *Judenfrei* (free of Jews), we found comfort in the fact that a growing, proud, and vocal Jewish community is flourishing in that very land. Ignoring this community would be akin to granting Hitler’s wish.

We departed feeling inspired to stay connected somehow to the Jewish community of Germany. We left with ideas for lending support, arranging student exchanges, and organizing future missions with groups like ours. The fact that German Jewry is not on the radar screen of American Jewish philanthropy and that American Jews have a strong aversion to anything that relates to Germany, ignores the realities on the ground and fails to see the strong case for supporting this growing Jewish community.

It was meaningful to witness the steps that Germany has taken to confront its past, as evidenced by the many memorials and museums. We were inspired by the work of Dagmar Weiler, the Bridge of Understanding’s Executive Director, and her staff of mostly non-Jewish Germans. Devorah Servi, MAJCS/MSW ’01, noted upon our return home, “I was most moved by Dagmar’s commitment to making it possible and certainly more comfortable for Jews to visit Germany. Bridge of Understanding is an effective model for making changes in the ways Jews relate to Germany and to Germans. So often, as a community, we regard Jewish persecution as solely our burden, but clearly, many Germans are grappling with Holocaust history too.” ■

THE LAWS OF CHANGE

Jewish Legal Literature at HUC-JIR and in Reform Scholarship Today

(continued from page 13)

arrive, taking into account various methodologies of modern scholarship and incorporating them into our study. This is critical to our Movement and to liberal Judaism in general,” he says.

Law and Order

While conducting his career as Professor of Rabbinics at HUC-JIR/Los Angeles, where he has been an esteemed member of the faculty since 1963, Dr. Stephen Passamanek pursued a simultaneous profession as a Chaplain and Reserve Deputy Sheriff in the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department. Having retired from street work as a sworn reserve deputy in 1992, he is presently a chaplain with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms. His two passions meet in the pages of Jewish texts, where he has sought a *halakhic* perspective on the ethical questions that were raised while he was on the force.

Passamanek’s 2003 book, *Police Ethics and the Jewish Tradition*, explores several key questions in modern police ethics from the perspective of both legal and non-legal Jewish texts. This and other works spanning his more than thirty-year interest in this scholarly endeavor explore classical Jewish source material on such matters as use of excessive force by a peace officer, behavioral profiling, entry and seizure, and reasonable cause of arrest, all in the light of Jewish texts. His fascination with this subject lies “in the hard-edged realities of actual problems faced by Jewish communities through the ages.”

Dr. P. (as he is known to his students) contends that though there is a much that is of interest and pertinence to matters of public order and safety in Jewish texts, the connection has largely gone unrecognized. Most people, he says, believe that Jewish dominion

over matters of safety and security is a new phenomenon born with the State of Israel, “when in fact, there were times and places, particularly in medieval Spain, where Jews exercised a good deal of internal control where they had public order responsibilities under royal law.”

In another example, he tells a story from the Babylonian Talmud that describes a Jew who masqueraded as a gentile prison warden in order to shield his incarcerated brethren and to intercept and foil anti-Jewish plots.

“Though we often hear that a Jew is not supposed to deceive people,” he notes, “both rabbinic and biblical tradition show a very solid basis for deceptive practice if it is focused on people who are of criminal intent.” He cites the story of Queen Esther, who was planted as an undercover “mole” for eventual use against Haman, and of Abraham, who told Egyptian King Avimelech that his wife Sarah was his sister in order to protect her from harm, as examples of Biblical use of deception against criminals.

Passamanek’s pioneering work demonstrates a novel point of view on law enforcement, bringing *halakhic* literature and historical Jewish narrative to bear on modern police ethics. He is currently working on a large monograph touching on questions from capital punishment to firefighting, covering the domain of public order and safety in Jewish legal tradition.

Informing Leadership

Dr. Alyssa Gray, Assistant Professor of Codes and Responsa Literature at HUC-JIR/New York, attributes the abundance of creative *halakhic* work at the College-Institute to the institution’s openness to diversity. “HUC-JIR” she says, “which does not require adherence to any particular set of ideas about Talmud or *halakhah*, is particularly hospitable to the pursuit of new research trajectories in these fields.”

A scholar in the *Wissenschaft* tradition – a scientific approach to the study of Judaism, Gray says that studying the development of *halakhah* is a natural fit with the value system of the Reform Movement, “which encourages this search for truth, and has always accorded

pride of place to human reason and intellection.”

Dr. Gray is deeply engaged in what Jewish texts have to say about critical current issues in economic justice and human rights. She was recently a panelist on the HUC-JIR/New York symposium protesting the crime of human trafficking, during which she spoke powerfully from the perspective of human rights in Jewish law, applying classical principles to a contemporary crisis.

In order to foment innovation among its students, the College-Institute provides them with a firm grounding in the analysis of *halakhic* texts, through intensive coursework, top notch resources, and a diverse faculty, including its most recent appointment, Dr. David Levine, who will begin in July as Associate Professor of Talmud and Halakhah on the Jerusalem campus. Levine’s work focuses on contextualizing rabbinic perceptions and attitudes as part of a wider phenomenon of spirituality and religiosity in late antiquity

The House of Study

The Simha and Sara Lainer *Beit Midrash*, a traditional Jewish study hall, was recently founded at HUC-JIR/Los Angeles to create a collaborative environment for textual discourse. Its Director, Dr. Dvora E. Weisberg, Associate Professor of Rabbinics, says that though the *Beit Midrash* has all of the familiar trappings of a traditional Jewish study hall – book-lined shelves, tables, and *chavrutot*, pairs of students poring over texts, it is far from traditional. “The *Beit Midrash* was set up with the aim of bringing together the world of the past and the world of the present,” she says, mentioning the abundance of computers, electronic reference guides, and other modern technological advances. “I was excited to take something that is established and conventional and make it into something that is new and innovative,” she noted.

The conversations that take place inside the *Beit Midrash* are telling of the environment at HUC-JIR, she says. “Here our students can ask any question they want, and there’s no invisible line over which they cannot

* CIVIL MARRIAGE IN ISRAEL *

THE LAWS OF CHANGE

Jewish Legal Literature
at HUC-JIR
and in Reform
Scholarship Today

(continued from previous page)

cross. We encourage them to ask ‘why were the Rabbis constructing the arguments the way they did?’ and no one will say ‘how dare you disagree with Rambam or Rashi!’ She sees the College-Institute’s approach to text study as “encouraging the best that tradition has to offer without accepting all the models, recognizing through our differences that there are different modes of learning that can be combined.”

HUC-JIR’s students have been publicly acknowledged for their *halakhic* scholarship, most notably in the compilation *Reform Jewish Ethics & the Halakhah*, edited by Dr. Eugene Borowitz, Distinguished University Professor at HUC-JIR/New York and known as the dean of contemporary Jewish religious thinkers. The book includes fourteen original *halakhic* papers penned by Borowitz’s students in a course on methodologies in Jewish ethics that he created in the mid-1980s and still teaches at the College-Institute today. Students enrolled in the course embark upon an extensive study of a polemical ethical problem of their choice. They research the gamut of relevant ethical, *halakhic*, and contemporary literature pertaining to the issue and ultimately write an informed decision paper. The topic of the course is decision-making, but its meat is *halakhic* and ethical texts, and the students’ efforts are essentially responsa.

Greg Litcofsky, a fourth-year rabbinical student, took the course this past fall. He recalls the topics explored by his classmates – current issues ranging from organ donation and genetic engineering to torture in the military and rabbinical salaries. He explains that knowing how to decode classical texts and consult them in his decision-making process is central to his Jewish identity and future role as a rabbi: “I’m not bound to the

halakhah because I’m a Reform Jew, but I believe that it *must* inform my ethical decisions and my leadership decisions. It’s not the only place I go, but it is the first place I go.”

A Tradition of Change

The Reform Movement, as always, is evolving. The Pittsburgh Principles, the 1999 ‘position paper’ on the current status of the Movement, reflect a return to traditional Judaism, expressed in increased emphasis on Hebrew language in the liturgy and on the practice of *mitzvot*. Rabbi Richard Levy, architect of this document, opines that the changes echo a shift in the greater Reform community, and not merely an academic dialogue.

In his recent book, *A Vision of Holiness: The Future of American Judaism*, he explains the CCAR’s new guiding document, which defines *mitzvot* as “sacred obligations, the means by which we make our lives holy.”



**How can we widen
this stream? Change
its course and make it a
more nourishing stream?**



Practically, this means that one must construct a personal observance and a relationship to *mitzvot* based on thorough study and understanding of the essence of each *mitzvah*. As an example, Levy cites *kashrut*, Jewish dietary laws, where compassion toward animals is an underlying theme. To deepen the meaning of the sacred obligation, he advocates incorporating other Jewish environmental concepts into practice of *kashrut*: *tzaar baalei chayim*, concern for the pain of living creatures, *bal tashchit*, the ban against needless destruction, and *oshek*, the prohibition against consuming products raised

under oppressive conditions.

He finds that Reform Jews have embraced this idea, and are looking at the laws anew, seeking new routes to observance that incorporate their value system. They will be helped in this pursuit, says Levy, by HUC-JIR’s students – their future Jewish leaders – who “must encourage their congregants to ask as Reform Jews ‘how can we widen this stream? Change its course and make it a more nourishing stream?’”

Dr. Michael Chernick, Deutsch Professor of Jewish Jurisprudence and Social Justice at HUC-JIR/New York and a scholar of the history of *halakhah* and its development, is an observer of Reform Judaism’s ongoing religious development. He often reflects on the changes that he has seen in the Movement over time. An Orthodox Rabbi himself (he was ordained at Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary), Chernick says, “Though the use of the *mikveh* is taught in class study of the laws of conversion, it would have been unthinkable as short as a decade ago to have a movement-wide discussion on *mikveh* – the practice of purifying immersion. Yet recently, the movement held its own conference on the topic.” The national event, “Reclaiming Mikveh,” co-sponsored by the URJ and Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston, featured workshops and lectures by renowned clergy, educators, academics and Jewish leadership to explore the growing interest among Jewish men and women in the ancient practice, and to create new uses and rituals to enhance the traditional *mikveh*.

Chernick sees this event and the innovations that it yielded as demonstrative of an interest in re-interpreting and re-claiming *halakhah* among practitioners of Reform Judaism. Weisberg observes that this re-claiming of tradition has yielded remarkable combinations of practice, particularly among her students, some of whom, for example, have decided not to drive on *Shabbat* but are willing to perform intermarriages.

Observing this phenomenon, she “realizes that the Reform Judaism that I am experiencing today is radically different from the

* NON-JEWS IN SYNAGOGUE *



Members of the Cincinnati, Los Angeles, and New York Boards of Overseers traveled from throughout the United States to participate in the annual Joint Boards of Overseers meeting, hosted at the Los Angeles campus on April 20-22, 2006. They convened to strengthen personal connections, share the meaning of their commitment to HUC-JIR, and advance their mission of support. The program featured briefings on the strategic planning process by Rabbi Ellenson and Rabbi Aaron Panken; presentations on the academic partnership between HUC-JIR and the University of Southern California by Dean Lewis Barth, USC Dean Joseph Aoun, Dr. Joshua Holo, Director of the Louchheim School of Judaic Studies, Marlene Louchheim, and students from the School of Jewish Communal Service; and reports on Jewish educational training for excellence by Professor Sara Lee, Director of the Rhea Hirsch School of Education, the utilization of technology for teaching and learning by Gregg Alpert, National Director of Distance Education, and the Institute for Judaism and Sexual Orientation by Dr. Joel Kushmer, Director. Overseers engaged in an extensive discussion of "Best Practices and Challenges" and shared insights into their respective Board's programs to generate Overseer involvement, Board orientation, mentorship and engagement, active participation in the life of the College-Institute, community advocacy training, partnership with Reform congregations, and opening doors to prospective donors. A tour of the HUC-JIR Skirball Museum and Shabbat at Stephen S. Wise Temple rounded out a memorable weekend of learning, planning, and kinship.

Reform Judaism in which I grew up. When I was seventeen and decided that I wanted to keep *kosher*, my rabbi was aghast. 'How could you do this after I gave up all those things so you could be free of your burdens?' Today, many Reform Jews keep the laws of *Kashrut* and nobody challenges their conviction or identity." The tremendous renewed interest in Hebrew liturgy has changed the face of the movement as well. Weisberg says, "at the synagogue where I grew up, we prayed in English. I was always frustrated that I was learning Hebrew but I couldn't use it in a Reform service. Today that simply isn't the case."

This trend is part of what Dr. Borowitz calls "the second phase of Reform Jewish piety." In his address upon being honored with the 2005 Eisendrath Bearer of Light Award at the URJ Biennial Convention (see page 7), Dr. Borowitz postulated that an old Reform piety, grounded in an ethical religiosity cele-

*

The burden of proof has shifted. It used to lie with the voice that asked 'why maintain the tradition?' Today, the question is 'why not?'

*

brating emancipation and universalism has been replaced by a piety of tradition. "Instead of believing we are a community of universalists who retain some old Jewish roots," he says, "we now see ourselves in particular

terms, that is, as North American Jews whose ancient traditions and recent emancipation engender in us a uniquely intense dedication to the messianic unification of mankind."

Indeed, there is a renewed covenant between the texts of our ancient tradition and the Reform values of post-modernity, and it is informing Reform at its academic core and in personal practice. Dr. Gray explains that "the value of the academic study of Judaism for Reform is not just that it validates many Reform Jews' correct sense that Judaism has always been a dynamic, changing religion. The academic study of Judaism also teaches us humility: we see how much has been preserved amidst change." Washofsky points out that since it became common practice to consider *halakhic* discourse seriously, "the burden of proof has shifted. It used to lie with the voice that asked, 'why maintain the tradition?' Today, the question is 'why not?'" ■

On View AT HUC-JIR'S MUSEUMS

HUC-JIR Museum/New York

One West 4th Street, New York, NY 10012

Hours: Mon.-Thurs., 9 am - 5 pm; Fri., 9 am - 3 pm;

Information/Guided Tours: (212) 824-2205

www.edu/museums/ny

Admission: Free; photo ID required for entrance.

The Jewish Graphic Novel

Through June 30, 2006

Will Eisner, Miriam Katin,

Joe Kubert, Peter Kuper,

James Sturm, and J.T.

Waldman explore anti-

Semitism, Holocaust,

belief, and survival.



Journey Through Jerusalem:

The Art of Maty Grünberg

Through June 30, 2006

A career retrospective of the renowned Israeli painter, sculptor, and designer, expressing a metaphorical vision of Jerusalem.



Vision/Action: Designers of the Next Generation

Through September 22, 2006

The innovative creativity of the Neri

Bloomfield Wizo Academy, demonstrating

how visual thinkers in the vanguard of Israel's

graphic design, visual and digital communi-

cations, architecture, photography, video and

computerized imag-

ing, and fashion

and textile design,

are transforming

Israeli society.



Living in the Moment:

Contemporary Artists

Celebrate Jewish Time

Ongoing

The sale of unique and

limited edition works of

Jewish ceremonial art,

created by internationally recognized artists.



HUC-JIR Skirball Museum/Cincinnati

3101 Clifton Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45220

Hours: Mon.-Thurs., 11 am - 4 pm; Sun., 12 - 5 pm

Information: (513) 487-3055/8

Guided tours upon request. **Admission:** Free

An Eternal People: The Jewish Experience

Ongoing

Jewish themes of cultural heritage:

Immigration, Cincinnati Jewry, Archaeology,

Torah, Jewish Festivals and Life Cycles, the

Holocaust, and Israel.

The Archaeology Center at the Skirball Museum

Ongoing

A hands-on learning and research facility for

the study of Archaeology and Biblical and

Ancient Near Eastern history and culture.

Skirball Museum of Biblical Archaeology/Jerusalem

13 King David Street, Jerusalem, Israel 94101

Hours: Sun., Tues., Thurs., 10 am - 4 pm

Guided group tours upon advance request.

Information: (02) 620-3333 **Admission:** Free

Ongoing

Highlighting the archaeological expedi-

tions of the Nelson Glueck School of

Biblical Archaeology at three ancient

cities: Laish/Dan, Gezer and Aroer.

HUC-JIR Skirball Cultural Center/LA

2701 N. Sepulveda Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90049

Hours: Tues.-Sat., 12 - 5 pm; Sun., 11 am - 5 pm;

Thurs. 12 - 9 pm

Information: (310) 440-4500

Tours: (310) 440-4564 **Admission:** Free

L.A. River Reborn

Through September 3, 2006

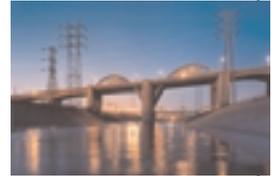
Photographs docu-

menting the fragile

relationship between

society and the envi-

ronment.



The Jewish Identity Project:

New American

Photography

Through August 27, 2006

Exploring the racial,

social, and ethnic diversi-

ty of American Jews.



Visions and Values:

Jewish Life from Antiquity to America

Ongoing

Featuring works from the HUC-JIR's per-

manent collection, this exhibition traces the

history, accomplishments, and values of the

Jewish people over four thousand years,

culminating with their

experiences in the

United States and

contributions to

American culture.



HEBREW UNION COLLEGE - JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION

היברו יוניון קולג' - מכון למדעי היהדות

Brookdale Center, One West 4th Street, New York, NY 10012-1186

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT No. 7732
NEW YORK, NY