# Kol Hamercaz 16

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This year saw the first signs of a change in the make-up of our student population with the intake of some Ultra-Orthodox students into academic programs at Melton.    We are aware of the enormous complexities for an ultra Orthodox student to study Jewish education at The Hebrew University together with secular students.  Unlike the fields of Medicine or Law, academic Jewish studies are not objective but open to many interpretations and touch on core of beliefs and ideologies.  However, Melton is proud that its programs provide a common sphere where students can work together to learn and exchange ideas related to education and the complex realities of Israeli society.  (See the interview with Shaindy Schechter below.)  At Melton we realize the importance of Jewish education which both in Israel and abroad should be considered to be the civic education of the Jewish People or the education towards Jewish citizenship.  As such Melton aims to raise the level of excellence in Jewish Education, to broaden and increase the number and variety of people engaged in the pursuit of Jewish education. Within this framework we are developing an innovative program on Civic Democratic Jewish Education which we hope to launch in 2014.  We have recently completed a brochure on Melton Funding Opportunities which outlines our programs and sets out the aims for the Melton Centre over the comings years.  We greatly appreciate the support we receive from our friends in Israel and abroad and we look forward to sharing this information with you.  If you would like to receive a copy, please contact me at [*zvi.bekerman@mail.huji.ac.il*](mailto:zvi.bekerman@mail.huji.ac.il)  In addition, we are working towards launching an Alumni Association and will soon be reaching out to our graduates around the world.  We hope that this association will provide a platform for academic and professional cross-pollination and a valuable tool for all our graduates and Jewish educators globally.  With warm wishes for a Pesach sameach,  Zvi Bekerman     Melton Coalition Conference: The Transmission of Jewish Culture Outside the Classroom   In February 2013 The Melton Coalition for Creative Interaction, a Joint Project of the Three Melton Centers at **The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, The Jewish Theological Seminary**, and **Ohio State University**, hosted a two day conference in Columbus, OH on The Transmission of Jewish Culture outside the Classroom.  The imperative to study Torah in Jewish culture is central and unremitting. The content of Jewish education over the course of history, however, has gone far beyond “Torah,” which is itself an amorphous category. The methods and venues for transmitting Jewish culture have likewise varied widely over space and time. The purpose of this conference was to look beyond the classroom and the typical Jewish school curriculum to examine the contents and locations of Jewish education outside the classroom. These were explored in presentation as varied as, The teaching of Jewish Foodways in the Kitchen; Jewish Sororities as Sites of Cultural Exploration in 20th Century America; Guiding Christian Pilgrims as Jewish Identity Praxis; Developing an Intensive Model for Torah Study within an Israel Experience for North American Jewish Teens; and the teaching of every Jewish subject through the dissemination of books that might be read anywhere.  The Conference was co-chaired by **Dr. Zvi Bekerman**, Director of the Melton Centre for Jewish Education at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, **Prof. Barry Holtz**, Director of the Melton Research Center for Jewish Education at JTS and **Prof. Matt Goldish**, Director of the Melton Center for Jewish Studies at Ohio State University.  The legacy of **Mr. Samuel M. Melton** z"l was clearly visible at this Conference.  It is thanks to his generous support that these three Centers, which proudly carry his name, continue to collaborate on innovative academic activities that strengthen the study and research of Jewish education globally.   Opening the New Academic Year with Our First "Be'Yachad" ('Together') ProgramA midday concert performed by the Oman Chai ensemble and a discussion with the artists   Close to forty members of the Melton Centre's extended learning and teaching community comprising  M.A. and Ph.D. students, administrators,  professors, lecturers and teachers took part in the opening of the new academic year "**Be'Yachad**" program, envisioned and coordinated by **Dr. Marc Silverman**.  The "**Oman Chai**" ensemble is composed of six gifted musicians led and accompanied by the piano playing of **Andre Hajdu**, a professor of Musicology.  **Prof Hajdu**, who recently celebrated his 80th birthday, is an eminent ethnomusicologist and a highly regarded composer, and a recipient of the Israel Prize for outstanding achievement in music.  The translation of  meaningful components  of  traditional Jewish cultural creativity and  life, in which music plays a central role, into a musical language that is at once contemporary, compelling and faithful to the music's original source and contexts, is at the core of  Andre Hajdu's and the **Oman Chai's** musical vision.  The opportunity for the Melton community to 'hear and see' the music-making of this innovative and exciting ensemble; to hold an in-depth discussion with its members and leaders on the nature and process of translating the Jewish tradition into a contemporary musical idiom, without compromising either their own integrity or that of the tradition; having informal time together over a light lunch; these activities embody the major educational objectives of this "Be'Yachad" programmatic framework.  Plans are now underway for the next **Be'Yahad** program which will take place in the first weeks of the second semester.   Covenant and Community: Launch of Professor Michael Rosenak's Book   Family, friends, students and colleagues gathered at the JTS-Schocken Institute for Jewish Research in Jerusalem on March 4 for the launching of **Professor Michael Rosenak**'s book **Covenant and Community: Six essays on contemporary Jewish life and education**.  The book, which appears as Volume 6 of the Jewish Theological Seminary’s Jewish Education Series, is a joint publication of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and the Melton Centre for Jewish Education.  Michael Rosenak, the Mandel Professor Emeritus of Jewish Education at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, has been teaching and writing on philosophical and theological aspects of Jewish Education for the past fifty years.  In recent years he has focused his attention on the problem of translation from universal knowledge and usage into an idiom that speaks directly to the Jewish tradition and seeks ways of articulating the Jewish tradition – as a faith and a culture.  His latest work comes at a time when religion in general and Judaism in particular has been sliding all too swiftly toward the right.  Prof. Rosenak presents us with an enlightened and moving series of essays that make belief and Jewish observance plausible, profound and endearing to those who refuse to be pushed to the extremes. He shows there is still a place for religion that can speak to the modern person who resists extremism, exclusivity, and intolerance.  **Prof. Shmuel Glick** of the Schocken Institute and **Dr. Zvi Bekerman** of the Melton Centre for Jewish Education welcomed the guests.  **Prof. Jonathan Cohen** gave a talk on "Reading Rosenak: Guidelines for Covenant and Community" and **Prof. Barry Holtz** spoke on "Educational Translation: Content and Discontent."  **Shuli Isaacs**, Prof. Rosenak's daughter, presented a bouquet of flowers to **Vivienne Burstein**, editor of the book, and praised her for her outstanding efforts in bringing this book to fruition.     Professor Paul Scheffer Guest Speaker at Faculty Seminar   The Melton Centre was extremely honored to have Professor Paul Scheffer as guest speaker at its faculty seminar which took place in December 2012.  Prof. Scheffer is a Dutch academic and publicist who has taught at the University of Amsterdam and is currently a professor of European Studies at Tilburg University.  He is also a prominent member of the Dutch Labor Party.  Zvi Bekerman in his opening words welcomed Prof. Scheffer to the Melton Centre and also thanked Mike Prashker, founder and director of Merchavim, The Institute for the Advancement of Shared Citizenship in Israel, who afforded the Melton Centre the opportunity to hear Prof. Scheffer.  Prof. Scheffer spoke on "Diversity and Integration Challenges Facing Contemporary Europe: Reflections on the trajectory of Israeli society; towards greater accommodation or fragmentation?  The talk was well received and an interesting discussion ensued in light of his presentation with the Melton faculty present.   Admin Profile: Meet Irit Harat   The Hebrew University has been a second home to **Irit Harat**, Executive Director of the Melton Centre since she completed her military service over 20 years ago.  Already as a B.A. student in the Economics Department she embarked on her first job as secretary in the History Department and was soon promoted to Department Coordinator.  Having completed her degree and being already married to **Shachar** with two daughters, **Adi** and **Hila**, (now aged 17 and 14.5), Irit was ready to move into a position in her field and took on the position of economist in the Finance Department.  Four years later she moved to the School for Engineering and Computer Science where she worked as their accountant until joining the Melton Centre five years ago.  The move to the Melton Centre came at a time when Irit was ready to take on new responsibilities and become more involved in the core elements of a department and not only the finances.  She has found this opportunity here at the Melton Centre, where her position covers human resources, budgets, general administration, conferences, fundraising, and more.  Melton has opened up a whole new world: that of Jewish Education.   After five years in the position she clearly sees the importance of Jewish education and its impact both in Israel and abroad.  It has also deepened her own connection to her roots.  The vision of the Melton Center is important to her and she is proud to be a part of this enterprise, both in its academic activities and with the unique 'social' aspects of the Centre.  "At Melton each member of staff has an important role to play and there is an excellent rapport between academic and administrative staff – not always a given in a university."  Finances, administration, and academics were not always Irit's ambition.  From a very young age her dream was to be a vet.  In order to compensate for her change in career choice, Irit and her family have always shared their home with a variety of pets.  Irit is also not one to shy away from challenges.  Recently returned from the grueling Queen of the Desert rally in the Himalayas in northern India, Irit brings back from this expedition inspiration, motivation and new tools to push forward innovative and exciting projects at Melton, to continue to build up working relationships in the Centre, and to ensure that the Centre maintains a well-balanced budget.   Meet a Melton Student: Shaindy Schechter As I walked into Shaindy Schechter's Home in Kfar Chabad, I knew I was in for a unique experience: an encounter with optimism, inspiration and inner peace.  To my naïve question as we met outside her home, "Is this the end of the road?" she quickly responded, "Depends on how you look at it; I think it's the beginning of the road." And so began my short journey into the tapestry of Shaindy's life, interwoven with belief, family, and 32 years in the world of education.  I had been sent to find out what brings a woman like Shaindy to study for an M.A. at the Melton Centre.  Sitting around her very long dining room table, surrounded by hundreds of books neatly organized in bookshelves around the room, I was about to find out.  Shaindy, mother of 10 and grandmother of seven, grew up in Kfar Chabad.  Straight out of high school she followed in her parents' footsteps, both educators in their fields, and studied teaching at the Beit Rivka Teachers' College.  She married Mordechai (Moti), also a teacher at the time.  Both were keen to do their Chabad shlichut in Kiryat Shmona, as it was the time of the First Lebanon War; however, the Rebbe decided that it was preferable that they continue their educational work in Kfar Chabad.  (Moti has since moved from the world of education to the world of hi-tech; however, their home is one of ongoing learning.)  While raising 10 children, Shaindy quickly reached the most senior level as a teacher. During the formative years of her family, her career suited her. However, once her two oldest daughters were married and her older sons left to Yeshivot, Shaindy felt the need to challenge herself academically and the desire for a B.A. degree set in.  She enrolled at Talpiot College where she completed her B.A within one year.   "Coming from a Chassidic home, intense study and not having time for myself were not an issue for me.  Chabadniks study all day, the 'aron sefarim' is the focus of the Chabad home, and the whole family helped out."  After graduating and a sabbatical, she once again felt the urgent need to study; in looking at options for study, Shaindy came across Melton’s One Year M.A. program.  A Chabad woman at a secular institute of education?  This was unheard of in Shaindy's world.  So, as with all major decisions in the Chabad world, she first had to send an Igeret Kodesh, a way of turning to the Rebbe to receive his advice from a collection of correspondence and responses the Rebbe wrote over the years to people on topics relating to all facets of life.  (The Rebbe had studied electrical engineering at the Sorbonne.)  The response was surprising: "Everywhere a Chassid goes, the Rebbe goes with him ….  But who says I want to go with you to University?"  And then came the twist "Everywhere a Jew goes, he has a task; you, too, have a task there.  May you have much success."  Shaindy had the go-ahead.  Shaindy expresses much gratitude to Eti Gershon-Cohen, Teaching and Student Affairs Administrator at Melton, who was a major influence in her decision to register and has been very supportive throughout. Arriving at Hebrew University was a shock. She quickly realized that she had more courage than wisdom.  The workload, the atmosphere, the language, the ideas, the society… it was all completely foreign to her. However, with her usual positive outlook, it did not take long to realize that she could bring another perspective to the conversation.  As a Chabadnik, she knew had a role to play on campus, and quickly became the address for frequently asked 'Jewish' questions on ritual. “I have had to learn to listen to ideas that go completely against my beliefs but I now have the tools to adapt them for the good of Hashem.  Chabadniks are taught to be tolerant, and even though so much that is said affects the very core of my being, my role is to show you can listen."  “The students are a mosaic of intelligent people from all walks of life and this gives me useful tools for my work as an educator.  And of course, I have learnt so much from all my lecturers.  They have taught me to take ideas, themes and narratives, and to 'dress' them to suit my life, my situation.  And I have learnt how to analyze dialogue in-depth, to look behind the conversation and see that there is so much food for thought, and to know how to control your speech and always to direct it to the right place.  This connects me to Hassidism, which in itself is a very demanding lifestyle.  The course on qualitative research has helped connect me to the source.  I have acquired the tools on how to voice my opinion and to share my thoughts and despite the huge gaps in beliefs and viewpoints I recognize the importance of listening to others.  One can learn from everything in life and I am fortunate to have received so much from my lecturers and fellow students. Melton makes room for all viewpoints.”  It hasn't been plain sailing. Once Shaindy realized what she had gotten herself into, she again sent an Igeret Kodesh, maybe even with the secret wish that she would be granted permission to drop out.  However, that was not to be: when she opened up the Igeret Kodesh what she read was 'One doesn't run away from difficult assignments; the Rebbe's blessing is with you'.  Once again, Eti was there to provide Shaindy with much needed support and, together with the encouragement from the Rebbe's words, she was able to move forward.  All this would not be possible without the support of her husband and children: two days a week, Shaindy gets home just in time to share a bedtime story with her kids, who always want to know what she studied that day, and Moti is behind her all the way, often sharing her experience by reading the articles on her course list.  Shaindy lives her life according to 'what can be done today, do yesterday'.  Besides her full time Melton program, she starts each day at 5 a.m. with an 8 km walk, has a hot meal waiting for the family every day when they come home from school and, if all this is not enough, Shaindy also studies Cognitive Behavior Therapy at Bar Ilan University. She herself says, "the time to rest is only after 120!”     The Melton Centre for Jewish Education The Hebrew University of Jerusalem  Mount Scopus Campus, Jerusalem 91905  Tel. +972-2-588-2033/34 Fax: +972-2-532-2211  Email: melton-centre@savion.huji.ac.il  [*Youtube*](http://www.youtube.com/user/MeltonCentre?feature=watch) - [*Facebook*](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Melton-Centre-for-Jewish-Education-Centro-Melton-de-Educaci%C3%B3n-Jud%C3%ADa/193414256698) - [*Twitter*](https://twitter.com/Themeltoncentre)    Director: Dr. Zvi Bekerman  Executive Director: Ms. Irit Harat  Chair, Academic Committee: Prof. Steven Kaplan | |
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