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Newsletter of the Melton Centre for Jewish Education
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

A Farewell Note

Zvi Bekerman



In this, my last communication to you as Director of the Melton Centre, I am pleased to announce that the Melton Centre's combined distance onsite learning MA program has received approval from the Hebrew University and we are ready to begin its development in time for the 2015-16 academic year. The 40 credits non-research program will allow students abroad to gain their degree studying 26 credits in their countries of origin and 14 credits during a two month stay at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

In order to ensure excellence in the program's use of new technologies, we are embarking on a campaign to secure financial support for this initiative. When I became Director of the Melton Centre two and a half years ago, one of my goals was to gain approval for this program in order to make Melton more attractive and competitive in today's markets. The MA distance learning program reflects the changing needs of Jewish education abroad and has the potential to revitalize the relationship between Diaspora Jewish communities, the Hebrew University, the Melton Centre, and Israel. The innovative technologies available today will combine the flexibility of online courses with HU's high academic standards, while providing essential encounters between academics and their students.

Approval of the MA program, together with the reorganization of our regular MA studies program – which now includes a one-year, non-research track MA program, an all English regular program and the recently reopened Rothberg International School MA English program – completes the structural changes necessary to bring Melton to the forefront of a dynamic academic world.

However, the liberal religious and non-religious Jewish communities with which we are involved need much more. The most basic paradigms in

Jewish Education cry for review. For over three decades, Diaspora philanthropists have invested millions of dollars in Jewish education. If stemming the tide of assimilation was the goal of Jewish education, little has been achieved. Rhetoric about the need to strengthen Jewish identity has failed to meet expectations, even when victimhood and support for Israel have been emphasized. Identity and other fashionable concepts – peoplehood, spirituality, etc. – remain elusive despite their prominence in Jewish educational research, and much of our research, isolated from general educational research, serves powerful funding organizations that can only afford success. In Israel, where Jews as a majority are better positioned to shape their future as well as that of others who share a democratic and Jewish state, we face even higher obstacles. Research in Jewish education is orphaned in terms of critical approaches. Information is compiled on what Jews feel, think, and identify with, and recommendations are made on the ideological "oughts" of Jewish education while we remain ignorant about what is actually practiced in our educational settings.

However, we should be optimistic. In a recent meeting in Europe where I presented my views on the current state of Jewish education, I was impressed with the willingness of the leadership of some of the major foundations supporting Jewish education present to rethink their work. The Melton Centre should become a leading force in guiding the implementation of critically-oriented, scientifically based research in Jewish education toward the future.

Having served to the best of my abilities, I submitted my resignation to the Hebrew University authorities at the beginning of May. The Melton Centre is ready for a new stage, and I am fully confident that **Professor Jonathan Cohen**, the next director, will bring in fresh ideas and directions. I take this opportunity to wish everyone at Melton, and especially Professor Cohen much success.

The Seymour Fox Memorial Lecture

The annual memorial lecture in honor of **Prof. Seymour Fox**, founding director of the Melton Centre, was held at the Beit Maierdorf Faculty Club on Mt. Scopus. The guest lecturer was **Rabbi Sergio Bergman**, who spoke on "Taking Judaism from the Community to the Public Political Sphere: the Argentinian Experience". Rabbi Bergman skillfully combines religion, politics, chemistry and human rights and his talk on issues related to the books he has published and how Judaism has to be relevant to the world was both insightful and well received.

Rabbi Bergman is a fascinating person who, in addition to being a rabbi, has an academic background in pharmacology, biochemistry and education. He is a PRO (Republican Proposal Party) legislator in Buenos Aires and was recently elected to the Chamber of Deputies, the Lower House of Argentina's National Parliament. He is the first rabbi ever to be elected to a representative post in Argentina.

Rabbi Bergman is the founder of a network of Jewish schools and educational projects that include a gay alliance and a rural farm. He is a recipient of the Micah Award from the World Union for Progressive Judaism for his commitment to social justice and, beyond the Jewish community, is also recognized as a leading thinker on the issues of spirituality and interfaith activism.



Aviv Cohen participates in AERA Conference

Dr. Aviv Cohen, a Postdoctoral Fellow at The Melton Centre, recently returned from the US after participating in the international conference of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), which was held in Philadelphia, PA.

Throughout the five days of the conference, Aviv participated in several sessions that dealt with the topic of civic education. It was interesting for him to hear about different cases from around the globe (USA, Romania, Russia, China, Lebanon, Iraq and more) and to discover how the issues they deal with are similar to the issues we have here at home in Israel. For example, many discussed the challenge of finding a balance between a nationalistic approach to civic education vs. a more liberal one.

Another theme prominent throughout the conference was that of high-stakes testing – tests of high importance, such as those leading to a national matriculation certificate. Many questioned the ability of such tests to evaluate the “success” of the civic education process.

Aviv enjoyed participating in such an event that brings together so many scholars from the field of educational research and he looks forward to traveling to next year's conference in Chicago.

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Hands-On Learning Wins the Photo Contest

We are pleased to announce that **David Katz**, from **Sicha Basadeh** (Hands-on Learning) is the winner of the Melton Centre's **Images of Sites and Practices in Jewish Education** contest. The beautiful photo (shown below), of a young boy making olive oil for Hannukah, clearly demonstrates David's philosophy of learning.

Originally from Cleveland OH, David is the product of a formal yeshiva education combined with many years of developing and teaching informally in Bnei Akiva and summer camps in the US. As a camp director and counselor he developed many creative education programs for the campers and continued to do so well into his college years at Yeshiva University. After completing his B.A., he came to Jerusalem to study for the rabbinate at Yeshivat Har Etzion and then entered the Israeli educational system as a classroom teacher, teaching Jewish subjects and the sciences. At all stages of his career, David has been on the lookout for ways to combine formal and informal education. As a proponent of "hands can form minds", he registered for the Melton Centre's M.A. program in his sabbatical year to pursue and further develop his passion on how to bridge between active learning and Jewish content education.

After his sabbatical David was invited to the Fuchs Mizrahi School in Cleveland, OH, where he spent one year creating the "hardware" and the "software" for programs from K-12. David describes the hardware as the physical and interactive component of the learning unit, and the content and subject matter as the software. He developed curricula across the board – together with the educators for both secular and religious studies in the school, creating interactive and engaging units which complemented the curricula. The programs formed a bridge between the Beit Midrash, the classroom and the science lab, and to other disciplines taught in the school.

The winning photo depicts the making of olive oil for Hannukah; however, it reflects far more. Not only did the curriculum include learning about the midrash on Hannukah, and the biblical way of making olive oil, it also included the technology, science, biology, economics and social aspects of olive oil consumption and production.

Since returning to Israel, David has begun a new venture: Sichu Basadeh, a company that specializes in experiential learning curricula for schools in Israel and the US. Learning experiences such as the one in the winning photo can also be had with matza baking, succah building, electricity and a whole range of fascinating subjects.

While David brings Jewish content into the schools from an innovative and multi-disciplinary perspective, his wife Devorah enriches the Jewish experience in homes with her resource-packed website (www.challahcrumbs.com). They have five children: Yael (14), Yoni, (turning bar mitzvah), Eitan (10), Channan (6) and Dov (5).

Meet the Melton Students:

We would like to share the research work currently being carried out at the Melton Centre. Please click on the links below to hear interviews with Melton students on their research work.

IN ENGLISH

Micha Belzer

<http://youtu.be/hj-T29MoN0U>

Daniel Soloway

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1PxJ-BgSFhA>

IN HEBREW

Joel Spitz

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Su6pKZjuXbg>

Daniel Soloway

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LOkjwmr7rXc>

Yossi Samet

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2whxaB4ATs>

Micha Belzer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6T-1m2YnVvM>

Malki Cohen

<http://youtu.be/1Fu8hubj4WM>

Michael Levi

<http://youtu.be/Uva0lotFHKw>

Judith Ginger

<http://youtu.be/ID3nbJWNbB4>



Meet a Melton Graduate: Rachel Ben Dor Ph.D

Having completed her undergraduate and graduate degrees in the Department of Jewish Studies at Hebrew University and at the University of Haifa, Rachel was looking to pursue her studies at an institute where she could add aspects of cultural and educational theory to her study of Talmudic literature.

Rachel's academic and professional focus was the teaching of *Sifrut Hazal* (Rabbinic Literature). She was searching for a place that was not only interdisciplinary, but also known to develop research methods that enable extracting meanings from canonical texts that are relevant to the present. Thereby, she could combine her interest in the field of Judaic Studies with her educational practice.

As a student, Rachel had been inspired by **Dr. Asher Shkedi**, who taught her about the world of Jewish Education and **Prof. Marc Hirshman**, who introduced her to the world of Talmud and Midrash, and invited her to the Melton Centre to learn about its academic philosophy. At Melton, Rachel was fortunate to meet with **Prof. Mike Rosenak** (z"l), who explained how the application of methods taken from the social sciences and humanities is implemented by Melton's scholars to expand research in Jewish education. This dialectic approach was compatible with her desire to further enhance the knowledge she had acquired from her mentor, **Prof. Shulamit Valer**, who has emphasized the moral duality found in rabbinic literature regarding female leadership. Studying Talmud from a gender perspective, while focusing on conflicting textual segments that emphasize the gap between *halacha* and social norms, was in line with the research outlook Rachel found at Melton. The next few years of study at Melton were to be very beneficial for establishing her research approach and carrying out a multidisciplinary study on the history of gender research formation in Jewish Studies.

The scholarship of the professors at the Melton Centre inspired her to follow their path by 'discovering value conflicts as they appeared in canonical sources, revealing the texts' vitality.' (Cohen, J., *Studies in Jewish Education*, vol. 11, p. 15.) Being at Melton enabled Rachel to participate in many inspirational conversations with scholars such as **Prof. Joseph Lukinsky** (z"l), a prominent leader in the world of Jewish education. She had an exceptional opportunity to sit with him in a Jerusalem coffee shop and to internalize his encouragement to pursue her passion, both for Jewish education and political activism for peace. Ongoing conversations with other members of the Melton faculty – **Prof. Jonathan Cohen**, **Dr. Zvi Bekerman**,

and **Dr. Michael Gillis** – made Rachel feel at home and contributed to shaping her research arguments. Their support, together with the warm welcome by **Anat Jani**, **Eti Gershon-Cohen**, and **Hinda Hoffman**, eased her weekly trips from the Upper Galilee to Jerusalem and helped overcome the obstacles on the journey to the finish line.

Rachel currently teaches at a Lutheran university and also lectures at a Master of Divinity program at TLS in Columbus, Ohio. Situated close to the Melton Center at Ohio State University, enables Rachel to lecture and participate in seminars held at the Center as well as enjoy discussions with fellow researchers and make use of the excellent library for her current research regarding Jewish education for peace. She hopes to develop ties between educators and students at Melton Ohio and those in Jerusalem on issues relating to Jewish education.

Rachel's current research integrates advocacy for peace and the use of biblical and post biblical literature to communicate messages of tolerance. Much of this research is derived from her own experience as the chairperson of a grassroots peace movement in Israel, inspired by representations of women in canonical texts.

"My long voyage, much more complex than I anticipated, resulted in a thesis on 'Women researching women: narratives' formation of gender research in Jewish studies'. This was possible thanks to the support I received from many people, especially from Asher Shkedi, who opened doors to a new world of research methods, and to Marc Hirshman, who stood by me even though I did not always walk the path that was set out for me".

Rachel leads the seder for students and faculty at the university where she teaches. Rachel is teaching about the components of the seder plate, with an orange placed at the center - a symbol of gender equality.





Melton M.A. Graduates 2014

Mazal tov to

Michael Gillis upon his appointment as Head of Academic Programs at the Melton Centre.

Melton students who completed their Ph.D's this past year: **Rachel Ben Dor** (see interview), **Amihai Berlad**, **Liora Pascal**, and **Shmuel Shenhav**.

Melton students who received their M.A. degrees at the recent graduation ceremony held at Hebrew University on June 1, 2014: **Rebecca Aminoff**, **Eliana Bohmer**, **Orstav Dodani**, **Odelia Elimelech**, **Haggai Lavie**, **Amitai Mor**, **Keren Natan**, **Naama Rabin**, **Rina Ran**, **Israeli Ravid**, **Romina Reisin**, **Shmuel Rubin**, **Rinat Safania Schwartz**, **Noga Samia**, **Shaindy Shechter**, **Merav Sherem**, **Bella Shuvy**, **Mira Jung**, **Michal Tal-El**, **Aviv Wishkovsky**, and **Leah Zand**

Marc Hirshmann on the publication of the book: **The Gift of the Land and the Fate of the Canaanites in Jewish Thought** co-edited with Katell Berthelot and Joseph E. David, Oxford University Press, 2014.

Zvi Bekerman on the publication of the book: **Integrated Education in Conflicted Societies**, co-edited with Claire McGlynn and Michalinos Zembylas, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013

Errata: in the previous issue of Kol Hamerkaz there was an involuntary omission in the text of the **Admin Profile of Fabian Glagovsky**. The missing text in the final paragraph is marked in bold:

"So much so that he became a Melton Centre student, **and thanks to a three-year long scholarship from The Liwerant Center for the Study of Latin America, Spain, Portugal and their Jewish Communities**, he is studying towards a Ph.D under the supervision and assistance of Prof. Gabi Horenczyk, Dr. Yossi Goldstein and Dr. Marc Silverman".

Marking the 160th Anniversary of the Evelina de Rothschild School

An international conference on Education for Girls and Processes of Modernity in Jerusalem: 1854–2014 was recently held in Jerusalem to mark the 160th Anniversary of the Evelina de Rothschild School. The conference was the joint collaboration of the Evelina de Rothschild School, the Melton Centre for Jewish Education, the Department of Jewish Education at Tel Aviv University, the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute, Yad Ben Zvi and the Jewish National Fund.

Representing the Melton Centre were **Dr. Zvi Bekerman** who was a member of the Conference coordinating committee and **Dr. Michael Gillis**, who chaired a session on: Between religion and progress: religious educational institutes for girls in Jerusalem.

האוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים
המרכז לחינוך יהודי ע"ש מלטון

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3. הכרה למסל השתלמות
4. אפשרות לקרדיט אקדמי של 35% מהדרישות לתואר שני ולהשלמת לימודים במסגרת לחינוך יהודי.

האגף מוצא בקאוס הר הצופים ביחסי בינינו, לאורך שנה אקדמית אחת, מורים הרשמים לתואר שני יובל במענק הרשמה

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המרכז לחינוך יהודי ע"ש מלטון

לא מתפשרים, הולכים על הטוב ביותר...

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- תואר שני בחינוך יהודי בשפה האנגלית
- שילוב לימודי תואר שני עם תעודת הוראה

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האוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים
המרכז לחינוך יהודי ע"ש מלטון

לא מתפשרים, הולכים על הטוב ביותר...

הלימודים מרובים בשנה או בשנתיים ומתפרשים על פני יום או יומיים

לימודים לתואר שני (M.A.) בחוג לחינוך, במגמה לחינוך יהודי:

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- תואר שני בחינוך יהודי בשפה האנגלית
- שילוב לימודי תואר שני עם תעודת הוראה

התמחויות מקצועיות (ניתנת להרחבה עד השלמת תואר שני)

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