



# 75 YEARS AND BEYOND

**BERNARD REVEL GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JEWISH STUDIES**

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY





## RICHARD M. JOEL

President, Yeshiva University



I have developed a keen interest in the remarkable legacy of the first president of Yeshiva University. Through his unique vision and untiring commitment, Dr. Bernard Revel made it his mission to build, sustain and grow Yeshiva into the first college of its kind in the world.

When pondering the extent of his legacy, one must consider not only Dr. Revel's profound rabbinic scholarship, but his academic Jewish scholarship as well. From the beginning, he proffered a vision in which the world of Torah in all its facets and forms of study could be explored and celebrated at this institution; how fitting, therefore, that our graduate school of Jewish studies everlastingly bears his name and imprint.

The Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies, founded more than 75 years ago, finds itself in the midst of a spectacular renaissance. The quality of both our senior faculty, and a brilliant cadre of junior faculty, enables Revel to have an impact far beyond its boundaries. Our prestigious academic programs are simply unmatched. We're seeing an extraordinary increase not only in students pursuing master's degrees, but aspiring scholars who are working on their doctorates; so many of them have entered and enriched our communities with their immense knowledge and tremendous scholarly output. Within Yeshiva, Revel's vertical integration throughout the Jewish studies programs at this university has further fostered the sacred Torah Umadda conversation in inestimable ways.

In short, Revel is helping to conduct the profound symphony of our Jewish future. The increasingly significant role Revel plays in the community of Jewish scholarship is impressive and so very important for our Jewish future. For much of that, we must recognize the tireless leadership of Dean David Berger in combining both academic rigor and profound moral leadership which flavors everything this school does. Similarly, the creative and vigorous initiatives of Associate Dean Mordechai Cohen have contributed immeasurably to every aspect of Revel's recent achievements.

I look forward to seeing the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies continue on its course as a premier center of academic Jewish studies.





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This mosaic, appearing in the ancient Beth Alpha Synagogue near Beit Shean (Scythopolis) in northern Israel, was made in the 6th Century CE by artisan Marianos and his son Haninnah. (See page 31 for more information).

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## DR. DAVID BERGER

Dean



I am delighted to take this opportunity to introduce the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies to those of you who are not already familiar with it and to remind those of you who are of what we see as its many attractions. As both an academic and communal resource, Revel has much to offer both the world of Jewish scholarship and the broader universe of all who value Jewish learning and its capacity to enrich lives and broaden perspectives.

Revel is first and foremost an academic institution sharing the characteristics of similar programs throughout the United States and beyond. It is a non-denominational graduate program offering master's and doctoral degrees preparing its students for careers ranging from secondary education to the professoriate.

In crucial respects, however, it is special, even unique. The size and range of its faculty is extraordinary: 22 full-time Yeshiva University professors, almost all shared with the undergraduate colleges, and two distinguished senior adjuncts, all with a primary concentration in Jewish studies. It is safe to say that when one combines quantity and quality, such a cohort of scholars is unmatched by any Jewish studies program in the United States. Representing a broad spectrum of interests and disciplines spanning the Jewish experience from antiquity to the present, Revel faculty, who have published or edited more than 30 books since 2010, are positioned at the cutting edge in their fields.

The student body is unequivocally unique. There is no other graduate program in Jewish studies outside of Israel with a student population of comparable size that is overwhelmingly conversant not only with the Hebrew language but with the classic texts of Judaism. It is in fact far from clear that the qualifier "outside of Israel" is necessary. As a result, Revel classes in relevant fields can be conducted with a level of sophistication that is difficult to match.

The aspirations of Revel students are also unusual in their scope. In the PhD program, many seek the standard academic objectives of doctoral students everywhere, and they are thoroughly trained to perform at the highest level. In the MA program, however, a significant number take a year or two off from the pursuit of unrelated careers such as law and medicine to deepen their Jewish knowledge. Others aspire to become teachers of Jewish studies in high schools, communal leaders and rabbis with a command of academic scholarship that will enhance their skills and enrich their lives.

The centrality of Revel to the mission of Yeshiva University and its contribution to the larger community have led important communal figures to devote their energies to its continued growth and success. Mordecai Katz, chair of Revel's Board of Overseers, is a stellar case in point. Much of what the school has achieved has been made possible by his vision, leadership and dedication.

All of Revel's activities take place in an atmosphere that reflects respect for Jewish tradition and commitment to its cultivation without sacrifice of academic rigor. We welcome all qualified students to participate in this exhilarating enterprise.

## DR. MORDECHAI Z. COHEN

Associate Dean



It has been my privilege to serve as Revel's associate dean since 2008, upon the invitation of incoming Dean David Berger. Honestly, I wasn't eager to become an administrator—since I was fully engaged with teaching and a variety of exciting research projects (including an international research group in Jerusalem I directed in 2010/11). Yet I couldn't refuse a request made by David, whom I had respected for decades as a leading scholar, a towering intellect and a man of sterling character. In retrospect, I'm very happy I accepted his offer in light of the vibrant vision of Revel we have advanced together, as detailed in the pages that follow.

Dean Berger and I assumed the helm of Revel from outgoing Dean Arthur Hyman, who had served with distinction since 1992. Thanks to Arthur's committed work, and the dedicated support of Revel Board Chairman Mordecai Katz, the school we inherited was already strong, with a thriving master's program and a small but solid doctoral program, both backed by a substantial scholarship and fellowship endowment. Yet we saw opportunities to enhance Revel's standing as a premier center of advanced academic Jewish studies, including: (1) dramatic growth of the PhD program (from nine students in 2008 to 30 by 2012); (2) a heightened sense of community in the Revel student body (with average enrollment of 150, approximately 40 percent women) through special lectures and social gatherings; (3) the opening of new Revel space on campus with an elegant Dean's Suite and Reception Area and a dedicated Revel student-faculty lounge adjoining our classrooms; (4) regular Revel yemei iyyun (study days) in local synagogues that showcase academic Jewish scholarship to the broader community; (5) increased presence through social media: the newly designed Revel website, blog and Facebook page that together capture the spirit of Revel news, events and activities through indepth essays and lively photos.

Our hope is that Revel will serve as a resource not only to current students, but also to a wide constituency inspired by the sort of serious, text-based academic Jewish scholarship that our school represents, which we see as a special manifestation of Torah Umadda. This publication, which I have composed together with a dedicated team of Revel students and alumni, will introduce you to the new vision of our graduate school and its substantial achievements. If you like what you read here, there's more on our website, and we'd be delighted if you came to Revel to see the school for yourself—attend a lecture, enroll in a class, or register for one of our academic programs.



DR. BERNARD REVEL  
1885-1940



## REVEL AT 75 AND BEYOND

Founded in 1937 and renamed in 1941 after the late Dr. Bernard Revel, Yeshiva University's visionary founding president, the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies (BRGS) recently celebrated its 75th anniversary. Revel has graduated over a thousand students, many of whom have made their mark as scholars, educators and communal leaders. Dr. Samuel Belkin, second president of Yeshiva University, was secretary of the faculty in the school's early years. Dr. Norman Lamm, the University's third president and current chancellor, earned his PhD in Jewish philosophy from Revel in 1966.

Experiencing remarkable growth in recent years, Revel has become a premier center of academic Jewish studies recognized as such worldwide. In July 2008, Professor David Berger, a leading Jewish historian, was appointed dean of Revel, taking the helm from then-Dean Arthur Hyman (1992–2008), who—together with Revel Board Chairman, Mr. Mordecai Katz—had built up the school and placed it on a firm financial footing. To help implement his vision of Revel, Dean Berger appointed Professor Mordechai Cohen, an expert on Jewish Bible interpretation, to serve as Revel's new associate dean.

With the support of YU President Richard M. Joel and Provost Morton Lowengrub, Deans Berger and Cohen have implemented a six-part plan to reinvigorate the already first-class academic institution named after Dr. Revel.

- Expansion of the faculty, which now has 24 members (almost all of whom also teach in Yeshiva College and/or Stern College for Women).
- Expansion of the PhD program, which grew from nine students in 2008 to 30 in 2012. In response to this dramatic growth, Professor Daniel Rynhold was appointed in 2011 to serve as coordinator of the Revel PhD program, a position comparable to one he held in Kings' College, London.
- Construction of a new Revel center (that opened in September 2012) at the hub of the Wilf Campus, consisting of an elegant administrative suite and a lounge for graduate students and faculty adjoining the Revel classrooms.
- Enhancement of the academic and social activities for students outside of regular classes, resulting in a

strong sense of identity among the Revel student community.

- Cooperation with other graduate schools, including the launching in 2012 of a dual-degree program in Jewish studies and Jewish education with the Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration.
- Increased visibility in the Jewish community through Revel conferences, visiting scholar programs and *yemei iyyun* (study days) for the general public, both on and off campus.

As Revel enters its fourth quarter-century with these enhancements in place, the school is poised as never before to fulfill its core mission to serve as a world center of academic Jewish scholarship.



## PROGRAMS AND COURSES

### MA and PhD Programs

With a caring faculty, a reinvigorated doctoral program and a rich master's program, Revel offers an outstanding array of courses in a variety of fields. The curriculum emphasizes methodology, analysis of primary sources, and critical evaluation of secondary readings.

#### THE MASTER OF ARTS (MA) DEGREE PROGRAM

The Revel MA provides current and prospective teachers with broad and sophisticated knowledge in their fields of concentration. Beyond this central constituency, it appeals to individuals in all walks of life who strive to enhance their Jewish learning through a rigorous and stimulating program.

#### THE DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (PHD) PROGRAM

On the doctoral level, Revel's rich offerings and expert faculty guide students toward the realization of their full potential as researchers and academics advancing the frontiers of Jewish scholarship.

### Joint Programs

**The BA/MA Program:** Students enrolled in Yeshiva College or Stern College for Women may enroll in this program, pursuing their undergraduate and master's degrees simultaneously.

**RIETS / BTI:** Students enrolled in the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS) and in the Graduate Program in Bible and Talmudic Studies Interpretation (BTI) at Stern College for Women may earn a degree at Revel concurrently.

**Azrieli-Revel Dual Degree Program:** In this new program students enroll concurrently at Revel and at the Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education. Drawing from the best of both schools, this program is designed to provide aspiring Jewish educators with high-level professional preparation through training in pedagogical skills and academic Jewish studies. Students earn master's degrees from each of the two schools with a total of 54 credits, whereas in the past doing so would have required 66 credits.

### Non-degree and Auditing

While most Revel students pursue a master's or doctoral degree, those who wish may also apply to take individual courses as non-degree students or as auditors.

### Areas of Concentration

Revel offers MA and PhD degree programs in the following areas of concentration:

- Bible
- Ancient Jewish History
- Medieval Jewish History
- Modern Jewish History
- Jewish Philosophy
- Talmud

### Course Times

**Course times and Summer session:** During the academic year, Revel courses meet weekly for 15 weeks and are scheduled at 3 p.m., 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. Every June and July, Revel offers four summer session courses that meet three times a week for five weeks, at 9 a.m., 11 a.m., 6 p.m. and 8 p.m., under the aegis of the Harry Fischel School for Higher Jewish Studies.

The Bible concentration provides insights into the Ancient Near Eastern setting, conveys a deep understanding of biblical Hebrew and Semitic linguistics, and affords a rich appreciation of Jewish biblical interpretation.

In Talmud, students are exposed to academic approaches to the full corpus of Talmud and Midrash, to the insights provided by the Cairo genizah and to a pioneering approach to the relationship between the Talmudic rabbis and their Persian environment that has opened up entirely new vistas in the scholarly community.

Ancient Judaism, a recently added program, focuses on history, literature and visual culture from the Second Temple until the rise of Islam, including within its purview Josephus, the Dead Sea Scrolls, Talmudic history in Israel and Babylonia, Samaritan studies, Jewish-Christian relations and archaeology.

The program in Medieval Jewish History analyzes Jewish-Christian relations, Jews under Islam, messianism and intellectual history, with particular attention to rabbinic culture in all its forms.

In Modern Jewish History, Revel provides courses in the Jews of the United States with attention to subjects ranging from Orthodox Jewry to sports; in early Modern Europe with special emphasis on social history, book culture and the role of women; in Sephardic Jewry in the Arabic, Persian/Iranian and Spanish-Portuguese cultural orbits; and in 19th- and 20th-century Eastern and Central Europe.

The offerings in Jewish Philosophy cover the major medieval thinkers and mystics, Hasidism and the full range of modern Jewish philosophers and thinkers.

Following is a representative sampling of courses in each concentration that exemplify the wide range of offerings available at Revel:

### Sample Courses

#### *Ancient Jewish History*

##### **Dead Sea Scrolls**

Dr. Schiffman. Reading selected Hebrew and Aramaic texts from the Qumran library. Philological, exegetical and historical issues raised by the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and archaeological excavation of Qumran.

##### **Between Byzantium and Islam: Jews in an Age of Transition**

Dr. Fine. This course covers the period between Byzantine and Islamic rule in the Levant, the 6th-9th centuries, which has long been considered a "black hole" in Jewish history. It examines recent archaeological and literary discoveries that illuminate this period, as well as new scholarly concepts of hybridity, liminality and colonial theory. This course includes guest speakers and field trips.





### *Medieval Jewish History*

#### **Jews and Judaism in the Lands of Islam: From the Rise of Islam to the Mamluk Period**

Dr. Tsadik. Major developments in the Jews' lives under Muslim rule: encounter with Muhammad, perceptions of Jews in the Quran, hadith, and Muslim (Sunni and Shi'i) polemical literature. The Gaonic period, emergence of Karaism, world of the Geniza, and Jews in Spain and Mamluk Egypt.

#### **Medieval Jewish Family**

Dr. Kaplan. The social history of the Jewish family in Christian and Muslim lands. Family structures, relationships between parents and children, life cycle rituals, education, economic roles and images of women. Comparison of the experience of Jewish women in their different host countries.

#### **Jewish Culture in Medieval Spain**

Dr. Perelis. Cultural history of the Jews of Spain, from the Muslim conquest in 711 until the expulsion of 1492. Hispano-Jewish writing including poetry, chronicles, epistolary, travel diaries, polemics and philosophy. Interactions between Christians, Muslims and Jews and the possibilities and realities of Iberian convivencia.

#### **The Jewish-Christian Debate in the Middle Ages**

Dr. Berger. Major themes of medieval Jewish-Christian polemic: Christological reading of the Bible, philosophical challenges to Christian dogma, use of Talmud and Christian Scripture, public disputations, the problem of exile, and the impact on the political and social standing of the Jews.

#### **Mysticism, Magic and Liturgy in Medieval Ashkenaz**

Dr. Kanarfogel. The involvement of Tosafists and Ashkenazic scholars in mysticism, and the writing and interpretation of piyyutim. Overview of Ashkenazic prayer and ritual theory. The persistence of interest in these disciplines despite the objection of some rabbinic scholars. Comparison between Hasidei Ashkenaz and the Tosafists; differences between the Northern French and German centers.

### *Modern Jewish History*

#### **Early Modern Europe: 1492–1760**

Dr. Carlebach. Historical, social, and intellectual developments in the Jewish communities of early-modern Western Europe; emphasis on the transition from medieval to modern patterns.

#### **Print Culture in the Jewish World, 1450–1900**

Dr. Kaplan. The impact of print on Jewish life, learning and communities. Topics include material culture, print shops, literacy, religious and vernacular texts, censorship, Christian Hebraism and the development of an "international" community of readers. Visits to the Rare Book Room of the YU Library allow students firsthand experience with incunabula and early printed works.

#### **East European Jewry Confronts Modernity: The Haskalah in Russia**

Dr. Karlip. Endeavors of the Haskalah to reconcile Jewish and secular learning. Central figures of the Russian Haskalah: Isaac Ber Levinsohn ("Rival," 1788–1860), Samuel Joseph Fuenn (1818–1890), and Moshe Leyb Lilienblum (1843–1910) and how they confronted the challenge of modernizing Russian Jewry while remaining faithful to traditional Jewish texts in their educational and social programs.



#### **The Social and Intellectual Life of German Jewry, 1840–1933**

Dr. Olson. Development of German and Austro-Hungarian society and its religious and intellectual achievements. Social acculturation and emancipation, Jewish denominationalism and the emergence of Neo-Orthodoxy, the emergence of Zionism and Jewish nationalism, and the intellectual life and literary productivity of the Jewish community.

#### **History of American Jewish Orthodoxy**

Dr. Gurock. Attempts by Orthodox Jews to reconcile, accommodate, or preserve unchanged their religious faith and practice in a free society; differing lay and rabbinic perceptions of America; issues of cooperation and competition between Orthodoxy and other conceptions of American Judaism; growth of Orthodox institutions and parallels within American society.

### *Bible*

#### **Genesis: Biblical Cosmology**

Dr. Eichler. Textual study of the first chapters of Genesis, with emphasis on comparative data from the Ancient Near East.

#### **Hebrew Semantics and Lexicology**

Dr. Steiner. Sources of semantic information (context, tradition, Mishnaic Hebrew, cognate languages, morphemic analysis), lexicographic methods, and semantic theory in medieval and modern Biblical exegesis; principles of semantic structure and change

#### **Book of Deuteronomy**

Dr. Leiman. Selected passages from the Book of Deuteronomy, with emphasis on philological, legal, historical and ideological problems in light of Ancient Near Eastern parallels and rabbinic commentary.



#### **Biblical Narrative: The Book of Samuel**

Dr. Cohen. Literary analysis of biblical narrative: diction, characterization, dialogue, point of view. Comparison with other methods: Midrash, the peshat tradition, source criticism. Comprehensive literary study of the Book of Samuel.

#### **Book of Hosea**

Dr. Holtz. The Book of Hosea in light of modern historical and philological methods of analysis. Close reading of the Hebrew text, and broader historical, conceptual and literary topics that emerge from scholarly literature.

#### **The Medieval Peshat Tradition, c. 900–1300**

Dr. Cohen. The peshat school of exegesis in its Muslim and Christian intellectual contexts. The philological analysis of Saadia and his Karaite contemporaries in the Muslim East in the 10th century, developments in Muslim Spain (al-Andalus) in the 11th century, in Rashi's school in northern France in the 12th century, and in the offshoots of the Andalusian tradition in the 12th and 13th centuries: Ibn Ezra, Maimonides, Nahmanides.

#### **Jewish Philosophy**

##### **Philosophy of Judah Halevi**

Dr. Hyman. Major concepts of Halevi's thought based on an analysis of selections from his *Kuzari*; religion and philosophy, prophecy, 'inyan elohi,' 'am segullah,' philosophy of law, and servant of God; religious, philosophical, and historical backgrounds.

##### **Fundamental Beliefs and Dogmas**

Dr. Hyman. Maimonides' 13 principles in the light of antecedents and in the context of his halakhic and philosophic writings; analysis and critique by his successors, especially Crescas, Albo and Abravanel.

##### **Kabbalistic Views of Maimonides**

Dr. Dauber. Kabbalistic attitudes toward the thought of Moses Maimonides, ranging from attempts to reconcile Maimonidean and Kabbalistic thought to bitter criticism.

##### **The Ba'al Shem Tov**

Dr. Dauber. An examination of the life and teachings of the Ba'al Shem Tov and a critical assessment of relevant scholarship. The Ba'al Shem Tov's teachings will be situated within the context of the history of Jewish mysticism.

#### **Nietzsche and Modern Jewish Philosophy**

Dr. Rynhold. Friedrich Nietzsche's relationship to Judaism has long been a focus of scholarly debate. After some initial consideration of the classical debates, this course will focus primarily on the manner in which modern Jewish thinkers have implicitly and explicitly engaged with his controversial philosophy, in particular his potent critique of religion. Topics to be covered will include: 1) Nietzsche and Nazism; 2) Nietzsche's attitude toward the Jews; 3) Nietzsche, Rosenzweig and the nature of philosophy; 4) Nietzsche, Buber and nationalism; 5) Nietzsche, Soloveitchik and life-affirmation; 6) Nietzsche, Rav Kook and atheism.

#### **Halakhah and Contemporary Legal Philosophy**

Dr. Rynhold. Critical analysis of attempts to apply models of Anglo-American jurisprudence to the halakhic system. Models considered include legal positivism, natural law, Dworkin's interpretive approach and Cover's narrative approach.

#### **Talmud**

##### **Introduction to the Midrashic Literature of the Tannaim**

Dr. Hurvitz. Introduction to halakhah and aggadic Midrashim; definition of halakhah, Mishnah, Midrash; origin and development of hermeneutic rules; schools of R. Ishmael and R. Akiba; development and structure of the tannaitic Midrashim: Mekhilta, Sifra, Sifrei, Mekhilta of R. Shimon bar Yohai, Midrash Tannaim, and Sifrei Zuta on Deuteronomy.

##### **Introduction to Amoraic Literature**

Dr. Elman. Literary history and redaction of the Babylonian and Palestinian Talmudim and their interrelationship; yeshivot and prominent Amoraim in their geographic and historical setting; analysis of the Saboraic contribution to the Talmud and its impact on geonic and post-geonic codifiers.





### Middle Persian Context of the Babylonian Talmud

Dr. Elman. Jews and Persians coexisted peacefully in Babylonia for 1,200 years. In Zoroastrianism, Jews found a religion with doctrines of reward and punishment, a future life, a messiah (actually, three messiahs), the extirpation of evil, laws of menstrual impurity—in short, a religion similar to their own. The result was a very comfortable exile, as R. Huna comments in Menahot 110a. This course investigates the results of this long contact.

### Textual Development of Mishnah and Talmud

Dr. Hurvitz. The Mishnah and Talmud from the Saboraic Period until the recent, scientific editions, based on Geniza manuscripts, geonic Codices and Responsa, the Munich manuscript of the Talmud, the Parma manuscript of the Mishnah, and Geniza fragments of unknown printed editions of the Mishnah; early editions from Spain, Italy, until the Vilna edition, as well as hitherto unprinted material from the Institute for the Complete Israeli Talmud are examined.

## Scholarships and Fellowships

Revel provides generous merit-based scholarships to qualified MA applicants. On the PhD level, Revel also awards to outstanding applicants fellowships that are competitive with top American PhD programs. Revel's scholarship and fellowship endowments are the result of the tireless efforts of Revel Board Chairman Mordecai Katz, and the continued support of likeminded contributors who recognize the value of training academic Jewish scholars, educators and leaders at the highest levels.

## Apply to Revel

Qualified students seeking to enroll in any of Revel's programs are welcome to apply.

For admissions requirement and details of how to apply to Revel, see our website [yu.edu/admissions/graduate/revel](http://yu.edu/admissions/graduate/revel)

For further information regarding admissions and for questions about Revel scholarships and fellowships, please contact Revel's Director of Admissions Rona Steinerman at [steinerm@yu.edu](mailto:steinerm@yu.edu), or by phone at 646.592.4274.



## FACES OF REVEL

### Faculty

The essence of any graduate school is its faculty. Revel's 24 professors—many of them world experts in their fields—span the school's five major areas of concentration. Virtually all Revel faculty members are shared with Yeshiva College and/or Stern College, and are thus deeply committed to teaching on the undergraduate and graduate levels. In addition, all Revel professors engage in cutting-edge scholarship on subjects ranging from the Dead Sea Scrolls, to the original golden coloration of the menorah on the Arch of Titus, to the Tosafists of medieval Ashkenaz, to the story of the Jews of New York City—as detailed below.

Our faculty is divided into three categories:

- The majority (20 members) are **Core Faculty**, with full faculty status at Revel
- Two are **Associate Faculty**, who teach Revel courses regularly
- Two are **Senior Adjunct Faculty**, whose main appointment is at other universities but who teach courses regularly at Revel and guide Revel dissertations

### CORE FACULTY



**DAVID BERGER**

PhD, Columbia University  
*Ruth and I. Lewis Gordon Professor of Jewish History and Dean of Jewish History*  
Jewish intellectual history; Jewish-Christian relations; Messianism and Messianic movements; Jewish attitudes toward general culture



**BARRY EICHLER**

PhD, University of Pennsylvania  
*Professor of Ancient Near Eastern and Biblical Studies*  
Application of Mesopotamian literature to the study of the Bible



**MORDECHAI COHEN**

PhD, Yeshiva University  
*Professor of Bible and Associate Dean*  
Jewish biblical interpretation in its Muslim and Christian intellectual contexts; modern literary approaches to the Bible



**YAAKOV ELMAN**

PhD, New York University  
*Professor of Jewish Studies*  
Tosefta, Talmudim; rabbinic theology; unfolding systems of rabbinic legal exegesis



**JONATHAN DAUBER**

PhD, New York University  
*Associate Professor of Jewish Mysticism*  
Kabbalah and Hasidism



**STEVEN FINE**

PhD, Hebrew University  
*Professor of Jewish History*  
Jewish life in Greco-Roman times; art history





**JEFFREY S. GUROCK**

PhD, Columbia University  
*Libby M. Klaperman Professor of Jewish History*  
American Jewish history, with an emphasis on social and religious history



**ARTHUR HYMAN**

PhD, Harvard University  
*Distinguished Service Professor of Philosophy*  
History of medieval Jewish and Islamic philosophy; modern Jewish thought; Maimonides; Jewish ethics



**JOSHUA KARLIP**

PhD, Jewish Theological Seminary  
*Associate Professor of Jewish History*  
Eastern European Jewish history; rabbinic scholarship and leadership



**SHALOM HOLTZ**

PhD, University of Pennsylvania  
*Associate Professor of Bible*  
Mesopotamian literature and law and their relationship to biblical and post-biblical literature



**EPHRAIM KANARFOGEL**

PhD, Yeshiva University  
*E. Billi Ivry University Professor of Jewish History, Literature and Law*  
Medieval Jewish history; history of halakhah, pietism, mysticism, and educational theory and practice; cross-currents between Ashkenaz and Sefarad



**AARON KOLLER**

PhD, Yeshiva University  
*Associate Professor of Bible*  
Near Eastern languages; semantics and lexicography; archaeology and texts; intellectual and cultural histories of antiquity



**ELAZAR HURVITZ**

PhD, Yeshiva University  
*Dr. Samuel Belkin Professor of Judaic Studies and Professor of Biblical and Talmudic Literature*  
Halakhic and Midrashic literature; Geonic literature; Genizah research



**DEBRA KAPLAN**

PhD, University of Pennsylvania  
*Dr. Pinkhos Churgin Memorial Associate Professor of Jewish History*  
Early modern Jewish history and Jewish-Christian relations, with an emphasis on social history



**JESS OLSON**

PhD, Stanford University  
*Associate Professor of Jewish History*  
Modern East and Central European Jewry; German-Jewish history and thought; Austro-Hungarian Jewry; modern Jewish intellectual history; history of Jewish politics and nationalism



**RONNIE PERELIS**

PhD, New York University  
*Chief Rabbi Dr. Isaac Abraham and Jelena (Rachel) Alcalay Assistant Professor of Sephardic Studies*  
Jews in the medieval and early modern Iberian world; Inquisition and Crypto-Judaism; autobiography and travel literature; Sephardic diasporas; Jews in Latin America



**RICHARD C. STEINER**

PhD, University of Pennsylvania  
*Professor of Semitic Languages and Literatures*  
Biblical and mishnaic Hebrew; Aramaic dialectology; Semitic linguistics; Hebrew linguistics in the Middle Ages



**DANIEL TSADIK**

PhD, Yale University  
*Assistant Professor of Sephardic and Iranian Studies*  
History of the Jews in Islamic lands; modern Iran; Shi'i Islam; Iran's religious minorities; Iran's Jewry

**ASSOCIATE FACULTY**



**DANIEL RYNHOLD**

PhD, London School of Economics  
*Associate Professor of Modern Jewish Philosophy and PhD Program Coordinator*  
Jewish conceptions of law and ethics; the thought of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik



**SHAWN Z. ASTER**

PhD, University of Pennsylvania  
*Assistant Professor of Bible*  
Hebrew Bible; Mesopotamian literature; Northwest Semitics; history and historical geography of the biblical period; Midrashic literature



**JOSHUA ZIMMERMAN**

PhD, Brandeis University  
*Eli and Diana Zborowski Associate Professor of Interdisciplinary Holocaust Studies and Associate Professor of Eastern European Jewish History*  
Jewish social and national movements in Eastern Europe; Jewish culture in Eastern Europe; Holocaust studies

**SENIOR ADJUNCT FACULTY**



**LAWRENCE H. SCHIFFMAN**

PhD, Brandeis University  
*Professor of Judaic Studies*  
Dead Sea Scrolls; Second Temple literature; history of Judaism; rabbinic law and literature



**ELISHEVA CARLEBACH**

PhD, Columbia University  
*Professor of Jewish History*  
The cultural, intellectual, and religious history of the Jews in Early Modern Europe; Intersection of Jewish and Christian culture and its effect on notions of tolerance, religious dissent, conversion, messianism, and communal governance.



**SID Z. LEIMAN**

PhD, University of Pennsylvania  
*Professor of Jewish History and Literature*  
Bible; history of biblical exegesis; early modern Jewish intellectual history



## ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

The members of Revel's dedicated administrative staff are the school's gears and wheels, making things happen behind the scenes, planning and coordinating events, helping incoming and current students navigate their graduate studies, and fostering a growing sense of community.



**SHENIAGIA WASHINGTON**

*Assistant to the Dean*, joined Revel in 1999 and administers the office in all its dimensions. Students consult her on issues ranging from the smallest details of obtaining syllabi and registering for comprehensive examinations to the larger, sometimes complex issues that can arise with respect to leaves, graduation, etc.



**RONA STEINERMAN**

*Director of Admissions and Student Affairs* (BA, Brandeis University; MBA, Ohio State University; MA in Bible, Revel), previously a Wall Street recruiter, brings her networking skills to Revel to enhance its student community. She meets with prospective students to advise them about Revel's various academic tracks and with current students to orient and guide them through their graduate program.



**STUART W. HALPERN**

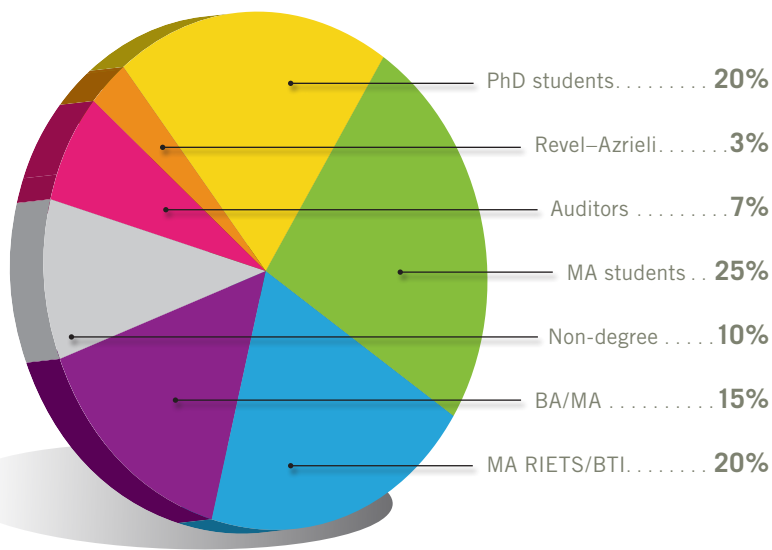
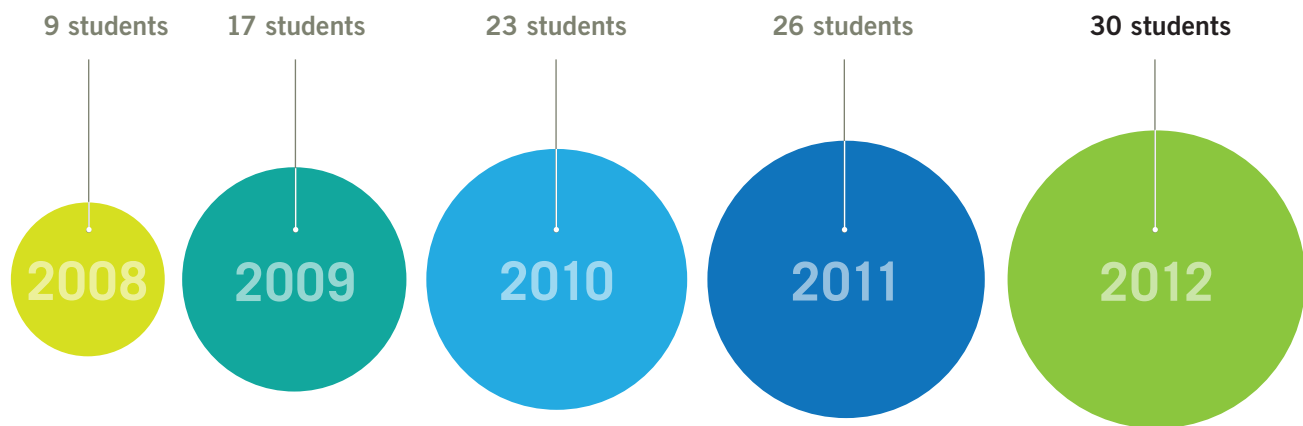
*Assistant Director of Student Programming and Community Outreach, and Revel Coordinator of the Azrieli-Revel Dual Degree Program* (BA, University of Pennsylvania; MA, Teachers College, Columbia University; MA in Bible, Revel; EdD, Azrieli School of Education and Administration), organizes educational initiatives for the student body and for the Jewish community. He also advises students pursuing a graduate degree in Jewish studies and Jewish education concurrently.



## OUR STUDENTS: MAKING IT ALL WORTHWHILE

### PHD PROGRAM

Revel's PhD program has experienced remarkable growth in recent years. From nine doctoral students in 2008, the program boasted a cohort of 30 in September 2012. This period has also seen an upsurge of activity within the PhD program, with regular PhD luncheons and lectures featuring distinguished visiting academics. In light of the program's expansion and doctoral students' need for guidance regarding their course of study, Revel appointed a new PhD program coordinator: Daniel Rynhold, also associate professor of modern Jewish philosophy.



### MA PROGRAM

Our MA program continues to thrive, attracting men and women from across the United States and countries around the world, including Canada, Colombia, England, France, Israel, New Zealand and Russia. In addition to students studying in the standard Revel MA program, many are in joint Revel programs with other YU schools (see page 8). Yet others are non-degree students taking individual courses for credit or auditing. The result is a diverse student body that enriches the Revel graduate community, which has consistently numbered around 150 students each year over the past five years.





**ANNE GUETTA**

MA candidate in modern Jewish history. Regional NCSY adviser, New Jersey Region. BA in land economy, Cambridge University. Originally from Paris.



**NAFTALI RATZERSDORFER**

Auditor. BA in political science, New York University (1982). Real estate investor. From Teaneck, New Jersey.



**ELIANNA MITNICK**

MA candidate in Bible/MS in Jewish education in the Azrieli-Revel Dual Degree (ARDD) Program. BA in Jewish studies, Stern College for Women. From New York City.



**EPHRAIM ILYAGUEV**

MA candidate in medieval Jewish history/*semikhah* at RIETS. Attended *yeshivot* in Copenhagen and Monsey. BA in economics, Yeshiva College. Originally from Moscow.

**Our Students**

Revel students have varying academic backgrounds, come from far and wide and are of different ages. While most are recent college graduates, some are practicing professionals, and others retirees. They all come to Revel with distinct purposes and goals, which they pursue through the graduate school's variety of programs and concentrations, from the conventional MA and PhD programs to our joint programs with BTI, RIETS, SCW, YC and, most recently, Azrieli. A sprinkling of auditors further enhances a welcoming atmosphere in which all students are made to feel at home.



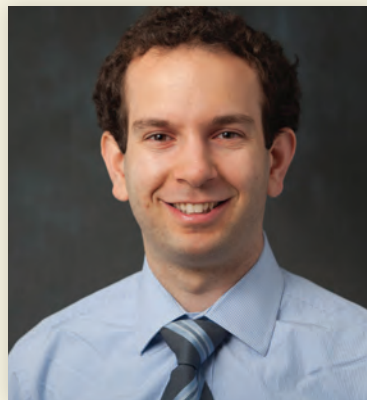
**DANIEL TABAK**

PhD candidate in medieval Jewish history. Graduate fellow at the Center for Jewish Law and Contemporary Civilization at Cardozo School of Law. BA in economics, Yeshiva College. Semikhah from RIETS. From New York City.



**MEIRA WOLKENFELD**

PhD candidate in Talmud. BA in ancient Near Eastern languages and cultures, UCLA. Completed Yeshiva University's Graduate Program for Women in Advanced Talmudic Studies. Originally from California.



**JONATHAN KLATT**

MA candidate in Bible/*semikhah* at RIETS. BA in Judaic studies, University of Pennsylvania. From New York City.



**Yael Landman WERMUTH**

PhD candidate in Bible. Graduate fellow at the Center for Jewish Law and Contemporary Civilization at Cardozo School of Law. BA in English and Judaic studies, University of Pennsylvania. From Teaneck, New Jersey.

## MEET SOME OF OUR CURRENT STUDENTS

### BIBLE CONTEST WINNER

Ezra Frazer



Revel has a winner! Rabbi Ezra Frazer, currently pursuing a PhD in Bible at Revel, and an instructor of Hebrew at Yeshiva College, participated in the International Bible Contest for Adults that took place in Jerusalem in December 2012. This was the first time in 32 years that the contest (conducted annually for youth) was held for

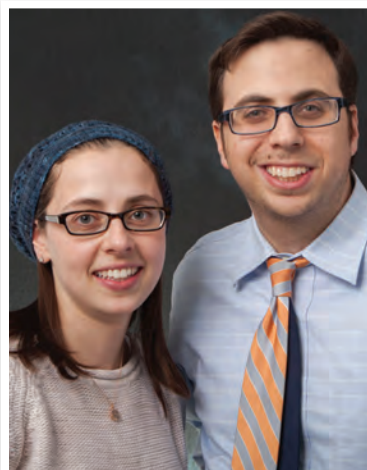
adults. Over two dozen Bible experts from around the world entered the competition, which required contestants to identify obscure biblical quotes and display a deep knowledge of hundreds of biblical people, places and events. Refael Meyuchas of Israel—a computer programmer for the IDF—won first place with a perfect score. Rabbi Frazer won second place—attesting to his proficiency in every book of the Tanakh. “The Hebrew Bible is the birth certificate and identity card of every Jew,” Education Minister Gideon Sa’ar said at the event. “The International Bible Contest contributes to the strengthening of the people’s spirit and tightens the bond between all parts of our nation.” Rather than focusing on his own impressive accomplishments at the Bible Contest, Frazer commented on the exhilarating mood it engendered: “It was incredible to see thousands of people—including the Prime Minister—fill a convention center to watch a contest that focuses on mastering the Bible.” Notwithstanding his humility, Ezra’s victory brings great pride to his teachers, colleagues and students at Yeshiva University.

Ezra Frazer, second from left, won second place at the International Bible Contest for Adults.



### REVEL COUPLE IN ACTION

Yael and Rabbi David Goldfisher



Not in every family are both mom and dad Revel students, as is the case in the Goldfisher family. Yael and Rabbi David Goldfisher, of Teaneck, New Jersey, teachers at The Frisch School and proud parents of four children, are both pursuing MA degrees at Revel. For Yael, it’s her second time around, as she earned her first MA in

medieval Jewish history from Revel in 2005, and has returned to earn an MA in Bible. David is studying for his MA in modern Jewish history, after having completed semikhah at RIETS before beginning to teach at Frisch.

Yael has been teaching Chumash at Frisch since 2004. In 2008 she became director of Israel guidance for girls, and in 2010 was appointed chair of Frisch’s Chumash department. She considers her continuing studies at Revel crucial not only for her intellectual growth but also to inspire her students to become part of the chain of the tradition of Jewish learning. “When I was a high school student,” Yael recalls, “my Chumash teacher Mrs. Teitz... related to the Torah not only intellectually but also in a deeply emotional way. It is this connection to [learning]... that I hope my students attain.”

David began teaching Chumash and Talmud at Frisch in 2005. In 2010 he became director of student activities, and in 2012 he began to serve as senior grade dean and Israel guidance counselor. For years, he had regretted not pursuing a graduate degree in Jewish studies, the benefits of which he came to appreciate from conversations with his wife. Inspired by Yael’s decision to return to Revel, David finally decided that this was the opportunity for him to do so as well. At first David thought he’d gravitate toward Eastern European Jewish history and Hassidim. But a course he took with Professor Perelis on Sephardic Jews in the New World fascinated him and changed his mind, leading him to make American Jewish history his MA concentration. Thoroughly stimulated by his Revel studies, he remarks, “There is so much I need to know that I never realized I had been missing.”



On being at Revel together, Yael comments, “We like being able to discuss what we’re learning and reading for our respective classes. Not only is this mutually enriching, it’s also great that our children—and our students—witness the value we place on continuing Jewish education on the highest levels.”

“Revel has afforded me an educational experience tailored specifically to my academic needs, with professors who represent the best in Jewish studies today, varied course offerings, independent studies and opportunities to study in institutions throughout the city.”

Yael Landman-Wermuth  
Teaneck, NJ, PhD Candidate, Bible



## ZAGREB JEWISH PHILOSOPHY SCHOLAR

### Vukan Marinkovic



Born in Zagreb in 1980, Vukan Marinkovic was already quite accomplished before joining Revel, where he is currently studying toward his PhD in modern Jewish philosophy. Having found his Jewish roots in his native Croatia, Vukan earned a double MA in philosophy and religious studies (2008) from Družba Isusova, a

Jesuit school, writing his thesis on Maimonides’ 13 principles of faith. He went on to deepen his knowledge of classical Jewish texts at the Paideia Institute in Stockholm and at the Maayanot Institute in Jerusalem. Back in Croatia he played a key role in fortifying and advancing Jewish culture and education as a lecturer in Jewish thought at the University of Zagreb (2009/10) where he helped establish a Jewish studies graduate program which opened its doors to students for the first time that year. At the same time, Vukan—who is a music and cinema connoisseur—worked at the production company Artim Produkcija as a creative director and event manager, establishing the first summer eco music festival in Croatia—“Terraneo”—in 2011. Yet Vukan was determined to further expand the range of his scholarship to the level that could be achieved only in a top tier academic Jewish studies program. He had forged ties with a number of Israeli scholars and was accepted at more than one graduate program in Israel; but he chose instead to attend Revel, since he identifies with its unique Torah Umadda mission that integrates academic and traditional study of Jewish texts and concepts. Though modern Jewish philosophy is his focus, Vukan also has a profound interest in classical and medieval Jewish history and thought, which he regards as critical for a genuine understanding of the philosophical meaning of Judaism in its encounters with modernity worldwide. He finds the Revel program—which offers an array of courses in all of these areas—to be stimulating and fulfilling. His Revel professors, for their part, are deeply impressed by Vukan’s profound and broad understanding of Jewish and general scholarship, and are inspired by his avid eagerness to expand his horizons further.

## ACADEMIC AND COMMUNAL EVENTS

Revel has long been a world center of academic events, and this aspect of the school has been enhanced in recent years with an increase in the number of special guest lectures, conferences and symposia held at Revel. Additionally, the school now plans and organizes informal social events that provide opportunities for students and faculty to get together and exchange ideas. Since 2009, Revel has cooperated with synagogues in the New York area to coordinate *yemei iyyun* (study days) and other lectures open to the public to showcase Revel’s outstanding faculty as well as some research topics at the frontier of academic Jewish studies, raising Revel’s profile and encouraging inquiry by all members of the academic and non-academic community. Below is a small sample. For further details and a fuller list, see our website.

### Conferences and Symposia

#### International Conference on the Thought of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik

An international group of distinguished scholars convened on YU’s Wilf Campus in July 2012 for a Revel symposium co-sponsored with Bar-Ilan University on the philosophy of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik (1903–1993). The event, open to the public, was attended by over 80 people. The “Rav,” as Rabbi Soloveitchik was known during his long teaching career, made an indelible impact on Yeshiva University and American Jewry at large, and his teachings are now becoming increasingly influential throughout the world Jewish community. In recognition of the Rav’s instrumental role in defining the Torah Umadda (Torah and general wisdom) philosophy of Yeshiva University, a central objective of this symposium was to clarify how the Rav’s thought related to that of other Jewish and non-Jewish philosophers. The symposium consisted of three sessions: “Prayer, Science and Cognition,” chaired by Revel Dean David Berger, Ruth & I. Lewis Gordon Professor of Jewish History; “Biblical, Halakhic and Liturgical Interpretation,” chaired by YU Professor Jacob J. Schacter, University Professor of Jewish History and Jewish Thought; and “Jewish Ethics and Metaphysics,” chaired by Arthur Hyman, Distinguished Service Professor of Philosophy at YU and former Revel dean. Presenters included Revel Professors Ephraim Kanarfogel, who was co-organizer of the conference, and Daniel Rynhold.





## Symposium in Memory of Amos Hakham, Noted Israeli Bible Scholar

Cooperating with the Yeshiva College Jewish studies department, Revel sponsored a symposium commemorating the influential contemporary Israeli Bible scholar Amos Hakham on the Wilf Campus in November 2012. Hakham, who passed away in July 2012, made an indelible imprint on Bible study through his influential commentaries in the Da'at Miqra series. Of the most humble origins, Hakham was catapulted to fame when he won the first International Bible Contest (Chidon ha-Tanakh) in 1958. The publicity generated by the event paved the way for Hakham (previously a clerk at the Institute for the Blind in Jerusalem) to acquire academic training in Bible. That training enabled Hakham to compose his highly acclaimed commentaries, which were the subject of the symposium that evening. The keynote of the symposium was delivered by Hakham's son, Dr. Noah Hakham of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, who remarked that Yeshiva University is the best place to commemorate his father's work, which was intended to incorporate the findings of modern Bible scholarship—including advances in Hebrew linguistics, and archaeology of the biblical world—into the traditional study of Tanakh, as exemplified within the rubric of YU's Torah Umadda philosophy. Other presentations at the symposium highlighted a variety of aspects of Hakham's lifework. YC Bible professor J. Mitchell Orlan vividly recounted Amos

Hakham's learned feat at the 1958 Bible Contest, where he manifested his command of the entire biblical text. YC Bible Professor Shalom Carmy illustrated the workings of Hakham's commentaries through the interpretive strategies he employed in the "Servant of the Lord" chapters in Isaiah. Revel Bible Professor Mordechai Cohen, speaking about Hakham's approach to the book of Job, drew upon earlier traditional commentaries to highlight his distinctive theological approach to the problem of evil. The event was attended by more than 80 people, including students and faculty from Yeshiva College, Stern College for Women and Revel, as well as other visitors.



“This is one of the few Jewish studies departments that has professors with expertise in every aspect of Jewish studies. There are medievalists, modernists, literary, cultural and social historians. I try to take advantage of that and I love it.”

YITZCHAK SCHWARTZ  
HIGHLAND PARK, NJ, MA CANDIDATE,  
MODERN JEWISH HISTORY

## Visiting Scholar Lectures

**MEIRA POLLIACK,**  
KARAITE BIBLE EXEGESIS



Professor Meira Polliack of Tel-Aviv, a leading scholar of Karaite Bible interpretation, spent a day as a Revel visiting scholar in May 2010. She

first met with our PhD students over lunch, where she shared her insights on the great Karaite interpreters of the 10th-century Jerusalem school. She focused on Yefet ben Eli, whose Hosea commentary she recently translated from Arabic into Hebrew in a volume published by Bar-Ilan University Press. Dr. Polliack later met with Revel students and faculty over dinner, where she described the trajectory of her own scholarly career, from her undergraduate work in Bible at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem to her doctoral work at Cambridge University in England. The dinner was opened to a group of undergraduate students from Stern College and Yeshiva College who expressed special interest in Dr. Polliack's areas of scholarship. After dinner, Dr. Polliack delivered a lecture open to the public on the subject of her current research project: the Karaite notion of the biblical "editor/narrator" (Arabic *mudawwin*). Dr. Polliack cited the distinctive usage of this Arabic term by the seminal Karaite thinker Yaaqub al-Qirqisani (Iraq, 10th century), as well as Yefet ben Eli, in contrast with comparable discussions by the Rabbanite exegetes Abraham Ibn Ezra (Spain, Italy and France, 12th century) and Tanhum ha-Yerushalmi (Egypt, 13th century). Following the lecture, a lively discussion ensued, reflecting the great interest of the audience in Dr. Polliack's research.

**MARK COHEN,**  
JEWS IN THE ISLAMIC WORLD

Revel hosted Dr. Mark R. Cohen, Princeton University's Khedouri A. Zilkha Professor of Jewish Civilization in the Near East, in November 2011. The day's events included a luncheon for PhD students and an evening lecture open to the public, preceded by a special dinner. Dr. Cohen, a well-known historian of the Jews in Arab lands in the Middle Ages, is the author of over 100 articles and several books, including *Jewish Self-Government in Medieval Egypt* (1981 National Jewish Book Award winner for Jewish history) and *Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages*, which has been translated into Hebrew, Turkish, German, Arabic, French and Romanian. At the luncheon, Dr. Cohen discussed with our PhD students how the Cairo Geniza—on which he is a world expert—can be used as a scholarly resource. Over dinner, Dr. Cohen discussed the history of Muslim and Arab anti-Semitism from medieval to modern times. His evening lecture, "Law and Society in Maimonides' Mishneh Torah," illuminated how certain commercial laws that were codified by Maimonides—and which perplexed later Talmudists—can be explained by looking at Cairo Geniza documents that provide a window into the prevailing commercial practices of Maimonides' time. The lecture was attended by over 60 Revel students and faculty, as well as other visitors.



**DEBORAH LIPSTADT,**  
HOLOCAUST



At a luncheon in December 2011, Revel students and faculty met with Dr. Deborah Lipstadt, Dorot Professor of Modern Jewish History and Holocaust

Studies in the Department of Religion at Emory University. Her most recent book, *The Eichmann Trial*, was published by Schocken Press in March 2011. She was introduced at Revel by her colleague and friend, Jeffrey Gurock, Libby M. Klaperman Professor of Jewish History at Yeshiva University, who praised Dr. Lipstadt for her profound Holocaust scholarship and her courage in facing Holocaust revisionist "historian" David Irving, who filed a libel suit against her in London in 2000. Irving alleged that Dr. Lipstadt had defamed his reputation as a historian in her 1993 study of Holocaust denial entitled *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory* (NY: Free Press, 1993). Under British law, it was Dr. Lipstadt's obligation to mount an affirmative defense by demonstrating her claims were true. At the luncheon, she described the substantial personal and professional challenges she faced in this case, about which the English Jewish community was understandably concerned. In the end, Dr. Lipstadt was successful, making her an instant celebrity in England. She not only defeated Irving, but Judge Charles Gray stated in his findings that "Irving is an anti-Semite and a racist," and one can therefore safely say so without it being libelous. This meeting brought home to students and faculty the continuing relevance of academic Jewish scholarship—and the importance of historical accuracy, both for the Jewish community and modern society at large.





**ANDREW KRAEBEL,**  
CHRISTIAN BIBLE INTERPRETATION

Andrew B. Kraebel of Yale University spent the day as a Revel visiting scholar in October 2012. Completing his PhD at Yale, Kraebel has already published a number of important studies on Christian Bible exegesis that have established him as a respected scholar in the field. At Revel, Kraebel presented his scholarship in three venues: a PhD luncheon; a dinner for students, faculty and alumni;

and a lecture open to the community. Tailoring his luncheon presentation to his audience, Kraebel shared the substance of his dissertation on the traditions of medieval Christian interpretation relating to individual biblical books according to their literal and spiritual (Christological) senses. The program began with an informal buffet dinner in the President’s Boardroom, which was attended by some 45 Revel students, alumni, and faculty—making it

a opportunity for members of the Revel community to socialize. At the dinner, Kraebel spoke to the guests about the academic interests that brought him to medieval Christian Bible exegesis, a discussion that our students—many of whom study medieval Jewish texts—found especially revealing. The highlight of the evening was Kraebel’s public lecture, “How did Rashi’s Christian Neighbors Interpret the Bible,” attended by approximately 65 people, including those at the dinner, as well as YU undergraduates and visitors from other schools. Kraebel enlightened the assembled guests with the history of Christian Psalms interpretation from the fifth through the twelfth centuries, showing slides of elaborately arranged and illustrated medieval manuscripts. As the ensuing discussion revealed, a comparison between the Christian and Jewish strategies of Bible interpretation proves to be mutually illuminating.

**Revel in the Community**

**Yom Iyyun: New Perspectives on Jewish-Christian Relations**

Revel professors, students and alumni gathered to celebrate the publication of *New Perspectives on Jewish-Christian Relations: In Honor of David Berger*, a collection of studies edited by Columbia University Professor Elisheva Carlebach, who also teaches at Revel, and University Professor of Jewish History and Thought at YU Dr. Jacob J. Schacter, both former students of Berger as undergraduates in Brooklyn College. At the conference, held in March 2012 at Manhattan’s Jewish Center, Dr. Carlebach lectured on “Jews, Christians and the Conflict Over the Calendar” from antiquity through the early modern period, while Rabbi Schacter presented “A Surprising View of Christianity in the Eighteenth

Century: The Perspective of Rabbi Jacob Emden.” Associate Dean Mordechai Cohen presented “Exile, Redemption, Human Love and National Saga: Peshat and Ideology in Rashi’s Song of Songs Commentary.” The final lecture, following words by YU President

Richard M. Joel, was by Dean Berger who presented his own particular insights on “Jewish Studies and Judaism: Personal Reflections on a Career in Academic Jewish Scholarship.”



## Scholar-in-Residence Program With Associate Dean Mordechai Cohen

Revel Associate Dean Mordechai Cohen served as scholar-in-residence at the Jewish Center, where he shared insights from the research group he directed in Jerusalem in 2010/11: “Encountering Scripture in Overlapping Cultures: Early Jewish, Christian and Muslim Strategies of Reading and Their Contemporary Implications” (see page 30). Following services on the Shabbat morning in March 2012, Dr. Cohen gave his first lecture, “Rashi in a Christian World: Parallel Revolutions in Bible Commentary?” This lecture was attended by over 400 members of the synagogue and guests. On Shabbat afternoon, Dr. Cohen delivered his second lecture, “New Light on Maimonides: Bible Interpretation and Jewish Law in Muslim Context,” which was based in part on his recently published book, *Opening the Gates of Interpretation: Maimonides’ Biblical Hermeneutics in Lights of His Geonic-Andalusian Heritage and Muslim Milieu* (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2011). Seudah shlishit featured Dr. Cohen’s third lecture, “Schools of Thought: Maimonides and Rashi on Job—Philosophy vs. Psychology.” There were many positive reactions to Dr. Cohen’s lectures. As one congregant remarked: “It was fascinating to see how cultural and historical factors played into the ways in which our commentators interpreted the Bible, making it meaningful for their own times.” This Revel-Jewish Center Shabbat exemplified the importance of academic Jewish studies—as taught at Revel—for a full appreciation of the sacred texts of Orthodox tradition.

## PhD Lecture Series

A series of four lectures by Revel PhD students entitled “A Taste of Academic Jewish Studies from Tomorrow’s Jewish Academics” was hosted by the Jewish Center in Manhattan on consecutive Mondays from April to May, 2012. It showcased the school’s talented young academics, who presented on the subjects of Bible, Jewish philosophy and Jewish history. The four lectures were:

- “*If you would know the value of money, go and try to borrow some*”: *Money and Debt in the Jewish Middle Ages*, by Jesse Abelman, medieval Jewish history
- *Condemnation, Conflagration, and Excommunication: A Closer Look at the Second Maimonidean Controversy*, by Daniel Tabak, medieval Jewish history
- *Maimonides vs. the “Fool”: On the Literal Interpretation of Aggadah*, by Chaya Sima Koenigsberg, Jewish philosophy
- *Piercing the Slave’s Ear and Other Biblical Legal Symbols in Their Ancient Near Eastern Context*, Yael Landman Wermuth, Bible

## Student Events

Since the installation of Deans Berger and Cohen at Revel’s helm in the fall of 2008, the school has organized activities at the school that bring together students and faculty. There has been an annual Shabbaton and year-end student-faculty reception. These events have done a great deal to create a sense of community at Revel.

## Revel Shabbaton

Revel hosted its third annual Shabbaton in Washington Heights in September 2011, featuring Friday night hospitality at students’ homes, a post-dinner oneg, and a communal lunch in YU’s Morgestern Residence Hall. Lectures were delivered by Revel Dean Mordechai Cohen and Professor Ronnie Perelis, and enjoyed by hundreds of shul-goers at Mount Sinai Jewish Center. Dean Cohen, who had recently returned from a sabbatical in Jerusalem, spoke about his comparative work on Jewish, Christian and Muslim scriptural interpretation at Hebrew University. Dr. Perelis spoke at the oneg about the spiritual quest of the 16th-century Spanish crypto-Jew Luis de Carvajal. During seudah shlishit he spoke about Ibn Gabirol’s use of the motifs and imagery of human love in his devotional poetry to God. At an informal lunch program, four veteran students discussed their chosen programs of study at Revel. Yaakov Weiner, a Bible MA student, attended the Shabbaton with his wife, Ora, to meet other Revel students and to hear from Dean Cohen, whose courses he has not yet had the opportunity to take. “I really enjoyed the Shabbaton, and I liked hearing from students in tracks other than mine about their experiences,” said Weiner, a Chicago native. “On a scale of one to 10 I would give the Shabbaton a 12,” said Estee Goldschmidt, a medieval Jewish history master’s degree student from Moscow. “I loved the meals and the opportunity to get to know the professors on a personal level, and to hear about their developments and research out of a classroom setting.”



### Year-End Reception 2012

The fourth annual Revel year-end Student-Faculty Reception was attended by more than 60 people in May 2012. It was a great opportunity for Revel students taking different classes to meet one another and to socialize in a relaxed atmosphere with their professors. This meeting celebrated the new vibrancy of the graduate school this year, with exciting presentations by the deans and

our graduating students. Dean Berger announced that enrollment in our PhD program is at a record high, and that the long-awaited Revel-Azrieli dual degree program will be launched in the fall. Dean Cohen announced the steady progress of Revel's new space on the third floor of Furst Hall with the Dean's Suite and Graduate Lounge—which together will immeasurably enhance the Revel graduate experience, with Revel classes now

meeting in adjoining rooms. The reception also featured brief scholarly presentations by two representatives of the graduating class (Yaelle Frohlich and Yaakov Wiener), with all graduating students mentioning their future plans. The reception was also attended by incoming students who were welcomed into the Revel community.







HEBREW

UNIVERSITY

UNIVERSITY

בית המדרש

האוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים

האוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים

בית המדרש

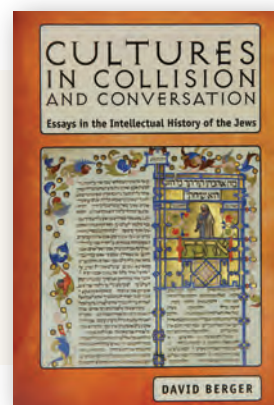


## RESEARCH

### Faculty Publications

Over the last two years alone, the Revel faculty has collectively authored or edited more than 30 scholarly volumes. Below is a sample of these volumes.

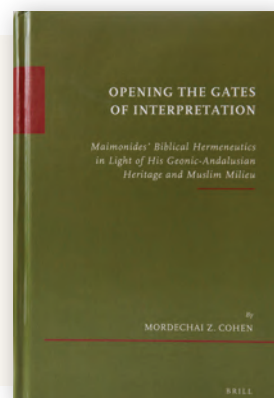
➤ **DAVID BERGER**, *Cultures in Collision and Conversation: Essays in the Intellectual History of the Jews* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2011). This volume addresses three broad themes in Jewish intellectual history: Jewish approaches to cultures external to Judaism and the controversies triggered by this issue in medieval and modern times; the impact of Christian challenges and differing philosophical orientations on Jewish interpretation of the Bible; and messianic visions, movements, and debates from antiquity to the present. These essays include a monograph-length study of Jewish attitudes toward general culture in medieval and early modern times, analyses of the thought of Maimonides and Nahmanides, an assessment of the reactions to the most recent messianic movement in Jewish history, and reflections on the value of the academic study of Judaism.



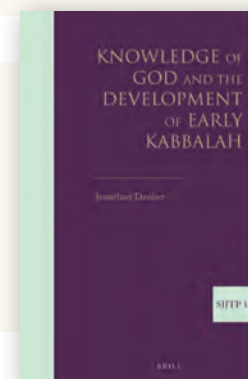
➤ **ELISHEVA CARLEBACH**, *Palaces of Time: Jewish Calendar and Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011). This volume explores a previously unexamined dimension of Jewish life: the calendar. In the late 16th century, Pope Gregory XIII instituted a momentous reform of the calendar, forcing Jews, like all minority cultures in Europe, to realign their timekeeping to accord with the new Christian calendar. Through her stunningly illustrated study of Jewish calendars, Dr. Carlebach reimagines the quotidian world of early modern Jewry, of market days and sacred days, of times to avoid Christian gatherings and times to secure communal treasures, revealing that Jews have always lived in multiple time scales, and illuminating how early modern Jewish men and women marked the rhythms and realities of time and filled it with anxieties and achievements.



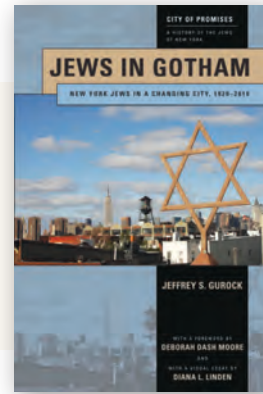
➤ **MORDECHAI Z. COHEN**, *Opening the Gates of Interpretation: Maimonides' Biblical Hermeneutics in Light of His Geonic-Andalusian Heritage and Muslim Milieu* (Leiden: EJ Brill Academic Publishers, 2011). The biblical hermeneutics of Maimonides (1138–1204) has long been underappreciated, and has been distinguished from the celebrated schools of plain sense (peshat) Bible exegesis. Redressing this imbalance, Dr. Cohen identifies Maimonides' substantial contributions to that interpretive movement. Like others in the Geonic-Andalusian school, Maimonides' understanding of Scripture was informed by Arabic learning. Drawing upon Greco-Arabic logic, poetics, politics, physics and metaphysics, as well as Muslim jurisprudence, he devised sophisticated approaches to key issues that occupied other exegetes, including the reconciliation of Scripture with reason, a legal hermeneutics for deriving halakhah (Jewish law) from Scripture, and the nature of interpretation itself.



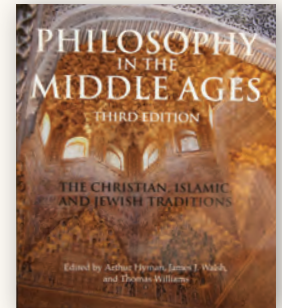
➤ **JONATHAN DAUBER**, *Knowledge of God and the Development of Early Kabbalah* (Leiden: EJ Brill Academic Publishers, 2012). In this volume, Dr. Dauber offers a fresh consideration of the emergence of Kabbalah against the backdrop of a new evaluation of the relationship between early Kabbalistic and philosophic discourse. He argues that the first Kabbalists adopted a philosophic ethos foreign to traditional Rabbinic Judaism that took root in Languedoc and Catalonia under the influence of newly available philosophical materials. In this ethos, the act of investigating God was accorded great religious significance, and this spurred the first Kabbalists to engage in their investigations of God and thereby develop Kabbalah.



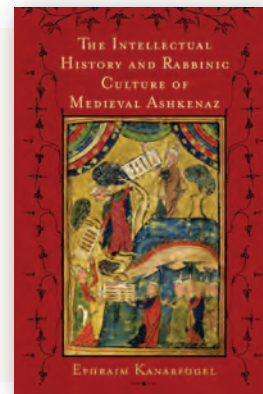
➤ **JEFFREY S. GUROCK**, *Jews in Gotham: New York Jews in a Changing City, 1920–2010* (New York: New York University Press, 2012). This volume, which includes a “visual essay” by art historian Diana Linden, highlights neighborhood life as the city’s distinctive feature and shows how New York retained its preeminence as the capital of American Jewry because of deep roots in local worlds that supported vigorous political, religious and economic diversity. It includes chapters dedicated to Jews of leftist ideology, which took serious hold during the Depression; Orthodoxy in the city; the role of the New York Jewish community during the Holocaust years; and Jewish activism in New York on behalf of Soviet Jewry.



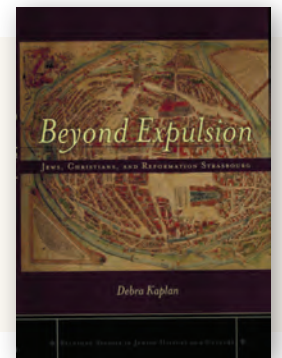
➤ **ARTHUR HYMAN**, *James J. Walsh, Thomas Williams, Philosophy in the Middle Ages: The Christian, Islamic, and Jewish Traditions, Third edition* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2010). Since the appearance of its first edition in 1967, this work has become a classic. Indeed, it is now the most widely used compendium of writings in the Christian, Islamic, and Jewish medieval philosophical traditions. It presents excerpts from, and analysis of, the works of the most influential philosophers in the three faith traditions, including Augustine, Boethius, Anselm, Abelard and Aquinas; Alfarabi, Alghazali and Avicenna; Ibn Gabirol, Maimonides and Saadia. The third edition builds on the strengths of the second by preserving its essential shape while adding several important new texts from authors such as Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, Bonaventure and John Duns Scotus.



➤ **EPHRAIM KANARFOGEL**, *The Intellectual History and Rabbinic Culture of Medieval Ashkenaz* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2012). This volume challenges the dominant perception that medieval Ashkenazic rabbinic scholarship was narrowly focused on Talmud. While Jews in 12th-century Christian Europe manifested little direct knowledge of Latin scholarship—in sharp contrast to the mastery of Arabic learning by their Sephardic brethren—this study shows that the intellectual interests in the Tosafist centers were much broader than Talmudic studies alone, and that Ashkenazic rabbinic scholars advocated a wide definition of the truths that could be discovered through Torah study. Dr. Kanarfogel explores differences in analytic methodology between the Tosafist schools of northern France and Germany, delving into aspects of biblical interpretation in each region, as well as the Tosafist achievements in liturgical poetry (piyyut), and their interest in forms of (white) magic, mysticism and messianism.



➤ **DEBRA KAPLAN**, *Beyond Expulsion: Jews, Christians, and Reformation Strasbourg* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011). This volume brings to life the history of Jewish-Christian interactions in Strasbourg, a city from which the Jews were expelled in 1390, to be readmitted only in 1791. Yet Dr. Kaplan shows that Jews who remained in the Alsatian countryside continued to maintain relationships with the city’s residents, and that in the 16th century, Jews entered Strasbourg daily, participating in the city’s markets, litigating in its courts, and sharing their Hebrew knowledge with Protestant Reformers. This book unearths the active Jewish participation in early modern society, traces the impact of the Reformation on local Jews, discusses the meaning of tolerance, and describes the shifting boundaries that divided the Jewish and Christian communities.



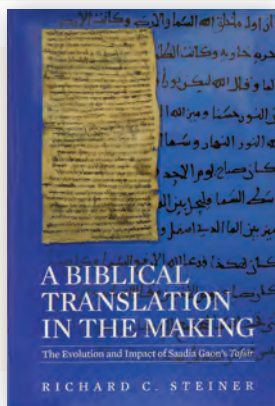
➤ **LAWRENCE H. SCHIFFMAN**, *Qumran and Jerusalem: Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the History of Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2010). With the full publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls come major changes in our understanding of these fascinating ancient texts and their significance for the study of the history of Judaism and Christianity. One of the most significant changes—that one cannot study Qumran without Jerusalem nor Jerusalem without Qumran—is explored in this volume. Although the Scrolls preserve the peculiar ideology of the Qumran sect, much of the material also represents the common beliefs and practices of the Judaism of the time. Dr. Schiffman here mines these remarkable documents to reveal their significance for the reconstruction of the history of Judaism. His investigation brings to life a period of immense significance for the history of the Western world.



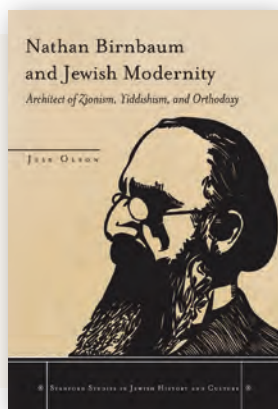




SHAI SECUNDA and STEVEN FINE, *Shoshannat Yaakov: Jewish and Iranian Studies in Honor of Yaakov Elman* (Leiden: EJ Brill Academic Publishers, 2012). This volume of collected essays edited by Shai Secunda (Revel PhD in Talmud, 2008) and Steven Fine honors Revel professor of Talmud Yaakov Elman, celebrating his contributions to a broad range of disciplines within Jewish and Iranian studies. The fruits of Dr. Elman's seminal project of bringing together scholars of Iranian studies and Talmud in ways that have transformed both disciplines are well represented in this volume, together with scholarship that ranges from Second Temple Judaism to Late Antique Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Samaritanism and Christianity.



RICHARD STEINER, *A Biblical Translation in the Making: The Evolution and Impact of Saadia Gaon's Tafsir* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, Harvard Center for Jewish Studies: 2011). In his youth, Saadia Gaon (882–942), one of the greatest Jewish sages of the Middle Ages, dreamed of publishing a proper translation of the Torah for Arabic-speaking Jews, to replace the overly literal ones at the time. His dream was fulfilled with the issuing of the Tafsir, which became the standard Judeo-Arabic version of the Hebrew Bible. This volume traces the history of the Tafsir—from its roots in what Dr. Steiner identifies as an early version prepared while Saadia was a student in Tiberias (a page of which has survived in the Cairo Genizah) to its subsequent evolution. Steiner reveals stylistic and theological features of the translation that reflect Saadia's strategies for battling criticisms from Muslim polemicists.



JESS OLSON, *Nathan Birnbaum and Jewish Modernity: Architect of Zionism, Yiddishism, and Orthodoxy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013). This book explores one of the most important but least known figures in early Zionism, Nathan Birnbaum. In mid-life, during World War I, Birnbaum left his position as a secular Jewish nationalist for religious Orthodoxy, an unheard of decision in his time. To the dismay of former colleagues, he adopted a life of strict religiosity and became a leader in the vibrant world of Orthodox political activism in the interwar period. Drawing upon the Nathan and Solomon Birnbaum Family Archives, Olson brings to light materials previously unknown in the study of Zionism, Yiddish-based Jewish nationalism and the history of Orthodoxy. This book mediates the complexities of Jewish political and intellectual life in the most tumultuous period of European Jewish history, as well as the interplay of national, political and religious identity in the life of one of its most fascinating figures.

## Student Journal

Guided by the school's faculty, Revel students engage in high-level study and research. The Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies Student Journal is a recently established publication of selected research papers in Jewish studies by students at Revel. It offers a current view of the rigorous academic writing and scholarship that characterizes the school.



Volume 1, edited by David Moster (Revel, 2010), appeared in 2010.

It includes studies on the following topics:

- Jewish martyrdom in the First Crusade
- The role of astrology in the Maimonidean controversy
- Castilian Jews in Fez after the 1492 expulsion
- The Nazi failure to implement the “Final Solution” in Denmark during World War II
- How the discovery of Ugarit influenced Bible scholarship

To download the most recent edition, visit [www.yu.edu/revel/research](http://www.yu.edu/revel/research) Volume 2 is currently being edited by Willie Roth (Revel, 2013).

## Faculty Projects Around the Globe

### JERUSALEM

#### Comparing Jewish, Christian and Muslim Interpretation of Scripture

Revel Associate Dean Mordechai Cohen led an international research group in a six-month project in the fall of 2010/11 entitled “*Encountering Scripture in Overlapping Cultures: Early Jewish, Christian and Muslim Strategies of Reading and Their Contemporary Implications.*” Convening at the Institute for Advanced Studies (IAS) at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the group included scholars from Bar-Ilan University, the Catholic University of America, the University of Glasgow, Harvard University, Hebrew University, the University of Maryland, the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Rome and Yale University. The group identified previously unrecognized connections as well as illuminating differences. For example, an intensive seminar was devoted to parallel conceptions of the “literal sense” (Hebrew *peshat*; Latin *sensus litteralis*; Arabic *zahir, haqiqa*) that emerged in the medieval period in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. On the other hand, the notion that Scripture is the prime source of law (religious and civil) is common to Judaism (*halakhah*) and Islam (*shari’ah*), but foreign to Christianity.

To learn more, visit: [yu.edu/revel/scripture](http://yu.edu/revel/scripture)



A follow-up conference was held in Jerusalem in July 2012 to explore further connections that emerged from written essays that each participant submitted based on their original work at the IAS in fall 2010. These essays, together with the new findings at the summer conference, will be published in a new scholarly volume of collected studies that Dean Cohen is editing together with Professor Adele Berlin (University of Maryland), a world-renowned Bible scholar and another key group member.

To learn more, visit: [yu.edu/revel/conference](http://yu.edu/revel/conference)

### ROME

#### Arch of Titus Digital Restoration Project

The YU Center for Israel Studies, directed by Revel Professor Steven Fine, led an international team of scholars in partnership with the *Soprintendenza Speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Roma* in a pilot study in June 2012, of the Arch of Titus in the ancient civic center of Rome. Dedicated in 81 CE, the Arch famously depicts Titus’s victory in the Jewish War of 66–74 CE. The team of scholars focused on the Menorah panel, which shows Roman soldiers carrying the spoils of war—including the Menorah (seven-branched candelabrum)—through Rome following the destruction of Jerusalem and the Second Temple. The team’s high resolution three-dimensional Breuckmann GmbH 3D scans of the Menorah and UV-VIS spectrometry revealed traces of yellow ochre paint on the arms and base of the Menorah, consistent with descriptions of the golden Menorah found in the Bible and other ancient writings.

To learn more, visit: [yu.edu/revel/titus](http://yu.edu/revel/titus)







NEW YORK

### Discovery Times Square: The Dead Sea Scrolls

Professor of Judaic Studies Lawrence H. Schiffman was a key academic advisor to an exhibit at Discovery Times Square in New York City in spring 2012, entitled “*The Dead Sea Scrolls: Life And Faith In Biblical Times.*” The scrolls, discovered by Bedouins in Qumran in 1947, include biblical and extra-biblical materials dating as far back at the third century BCE. Dr. Schiffman, a world-renowned expert on the scrolls, with nine books and 150 articles published on the subject, calls them “the greatest archaeological find of the 20th century.” The exhibit boasted a wealth of information and material culture from the Dead Sea Scrolls community, and featured Dr. Schiffman in its cinematic portions.

To learn more, visit: [yu.edu/revel/scrolls](http://yu.edu/revel/scrolls)

NEW YORK

### Metropolitan Museum of Art Byzantium and Islam: Age of Transition

Yeshiva University’s Center for Israel Studies (CIS), under the directorship of Revel Professor Steven Fine, collaborated on a groundbreaking exhibit, *Byzantium and Islam: Age of Transition* (March 14 to July 8, 2012) at the Metropolitan Museum in March 2012. Dr. Fine was assisted on the project by Yitzchak Schwartz, a student at Revel as well as a Met intern and research coordinator at the YU Center for Israel Studies. Showcasing around 300 exceptional works of art, *Byzantium and Islam* represented the first major museum exhibition to focus on this pivotal era in the history of the eastern Mediterranean. The exhibition featured a major catalog entry entitled “Jews and Judaism between Byzantium and Islam” by Dr. Fine, who was instrumental in choosing and interpreting the artifacts that illustrate the Jewish experience during this era.

To learn more, visit: [yu.edu/revel/met](http://yu.edu/revel/met)





## WHERE IT ALL HAPPENS

8

Revel is in the heart of Yeshiva University's Wilf Campus, on the 3rd floor of Furst Hall, a location that affords stimulating association with several of the University's other schools and affiliates, and provides easy access to the major resources of the institution.



Students and faculty gather in Revel's new Dean's Suite and, below, in the Student-Faculty Graduate Lounge.

### Administrative and Meeting Spaces

The Revel Dean's Suite and Reception Area serve as the school's center of operations. Located steps away from the Revel classrooms, it provides current and prospective students with access to the offices of the various members of the



Revel administrative team—the dean, his executive assistant, the associate dean, and the director of admissions and student affairs—all of whom are available for consultation. The Revel welcome desk is staffed by student liaisons who can provide basic information about the school's programs, as well as special events, both academic and social.

The student-faculty lounge, situated between the Revel classrooms, is a perfect spot for members of the Revel community to engage in lively discussions about their shared goals within academic Jewish studies. It features a conference table, a large flat-screen display, bookshelves displaying Revel faculty publications, two workstations, as well as couches and tables, providing a dedicated space for students and faculty to gather informally before and after classes.

Both newly constructed, the Dean's Suite/Reception Area and the student-faculty lounge are part of Revel's new vision to create a community of learning within an optimal academic and social setting.

### Classrooms

Revel courses convene weekly in classrooms surrounding the student-faculty lounge. Small class sizes create an ideal setting for maximum exposure to experts in the field, focused student-teacher interaction, and collaborative discussions. Many Revel classes feature seminar-style meetings that encourage student growth under the close guidance of their professors.

Professor Eichler teaches a class.







Professor Kaplan shows her class an early printed book in the YU Library's Rare Book Room.

### Library and Research Facilities

The comprehensive research collections in Jewish studies at YU's Mendel Gottesman Library—numbering more than 300,000 volumes, and access to a broad spectrum of online databases, e-journals and e-books—offer rich and diverse resources in support of our graduate programs. These are enhanced

by the library's manuscripts and archival collections, which provide the opportunity for research projects involving primary source materials. An experienced and service-oriented library staff with extensive expertise in the field assists students and scholars in all phases of research.

Professor Fine examining ancient artifacts with MA student Yitzchak Schwartz.



“The [Revel] course I took on the book of Jeremiah was incredibly useful. In addition to it broadening and deepening my knowledge of the text, it introduced me to several methods of *Tanakh* study that have proven valuable with direct application to my teaching of other biblical books. My professor conveyed his mastery of the material in a few short weeks. I consider that experience to be among the most insightful of my post-graduate studies.”

JONATHAN MOSES  
MA CANDIDATE IN BIBLE

## MEET SOME OF OUR ALUMNI



### YITZHAK BERGER

PhD in Bible 2003.  
Associate Professor, Hebrew Division,  
Department of Classical and Oriental  
Studies, Hunter College



### REBECCA KAHAN

MA in Bible 2001.  
Principal, Maayanot High School  
for Girls, Teaneck, NJ



### AARON KOLLER

PhD in Bible 2009.  
Associate Professor of Bible,  
Yeshiva University



### ADINA MOSHAVI

PhD in Bible 2002.  
Senior Lecturer, Bar Ilan University,  
Department of Hebrew and Semitic  
Languages



### MICHAEL ROSENSWEIG

PhD in Medieval Jewish History 1996.  
Rosh Yeshiva at the Rabbi Isaac  
Elchanan Theological Seminary of  
Yeshiva University and Rosh Kollel  
of the Beren Kollel Elyon



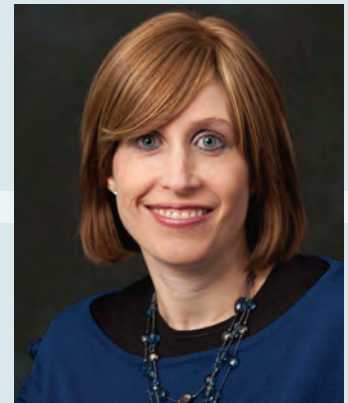
### SHANA SCHICK

PhD in Talmud 2011.  
Post-doctoral Fellow at The Center for  
Inter-disciplinary Research of the Cairo  
Genizah, University of Haifa



### SHAI SECUNDA

PhD in Talmud 2008.  
Martin Buber Fellow at the Hebrew  
University of Jerusalem



### SUSAN WEISSMAN

PhD in Medieval Jewish History 2012.  
Associate Professor of Judaic Studies  
at Touro College

These positions are accurate as of 2013.



## A MODEL OF CONTEMPORARY JEWISH LEADERSHIP

### Haskel Lookstein

Revel PhD in Modern Jewish History 1979



Rabbi Dr. Haskel Lookstein is unquestionably one of the leading rabbinic personalities on the modern American Orthodox scene. For more than 30 years, he has served with distinction as the spiritual leader of Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun (KJ) on the Upper East Side of Manhattan, and principal of Yeshivat Ramaz, a highly

acclaimed nursery through 12th grade Jewish day school.

Although he has worked prominently in numerous Jewish leadership roles (especially in the struggle for Soviet Jewry in the 1970s and 1980s), Rabbi Lookstein sees himself first and foremost as a Jewish educator, and in this sphere he credits much of his success to the training he received at Yeshiva University in general and at the Bernard Revel Graduate School in particular.

While studying for *semikha* (rabbinic ordination) at the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS) under Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik in the 1950s, Rabbi Lookstein also pursued a master's degree at Revel in order to gain a broader perspective on Jewish scholarship. In his view, a true understanding of Judaism requires a deep knowledge of the broad spectrum of Jewish learning represented at Revel, including Bible, Jewish history and Jewish philosophy, in addition to Talmud, which is taught at Revel and serves as the core focus at RIETS. And it is this diverse curriculum that has been instituted at Ramaz and in the multi-level adult education programs at KJ.

The centrality of academic Jewish studies in Rabbi Lookstein's outlook merged with his professional and personal life when he chose to pursue a doctorate at Revel in modern Jewish history, on the topic of American Jewish responses to the Holocaust. As he came to realize through his research,

American Jewry generally failed to react publicly, even as their brethren were being murdered in Europe. Perhaps as a result, Rabbi Lookstein made it a point not to be silent when it came to the distress of Jews elsewhere in the world, such as those in the Soviet Union.

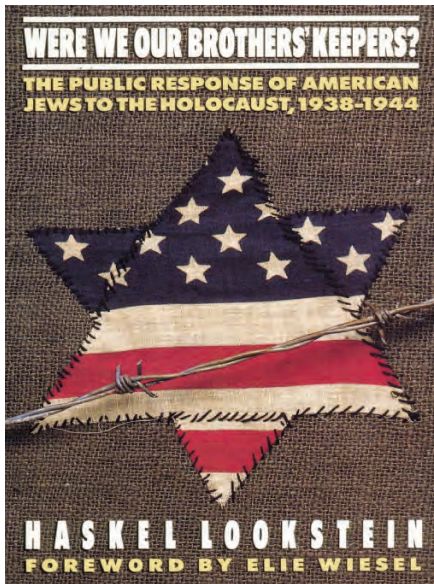
Rabbi Lookstein's doctoral research at Revel gave him exposure to great figures in the fields of Holocaust studies and American Jewish history. These included Professor Isaac Lewin (who taught at Revel from 1944 to 1985), an architect of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1981, and for which he was awarded the United Nation's Medal of Peace. "He was a heroic figure in the Holocaust," Rabbi Lookstein recalled. (Professor Lewin was born in Wieliczka, near Cracow, was ordained as a rabbi in Poland in 1935 and received a law degree two years later. He served two terms on the city council of Lodz, Poland's second-largest city.) "At a time when no one was sounding the alarm for the plight of European Jewry, Dr. Lewin was actually trying to do something about it."

Professor Haym Soloveitchik, dean of Revel from 1975 to 1980, is credited by Rabbi Lookstein for the completion of his doctorate. At the finishing stages of his research, Dean Soloveitchik encouraged Rabbi Lookstein to discuss his thesis with Professor Henry L. Feingold (then at the CUNY Graduate Center), one of most distinguished world experts on 20th-century American Jewry, and particularly its reaction to the Holocaust. Dean Soloveitchik also had a more overtly administrative role in Rabbi Lookstein's doctoral program: "It was the strict deadline he imposed in fall 1977 that forced me to finish it," Rabbi Lookstein explained. "He put the fear of God into me!"

Adhering to Dean Soloveitchik's deadline, Rabbi Lookstein completed his dissertation in December 1978, and received his PhD at the 1979 Revel graduation. Rabbi Lookstein describes nostalgically, with tears in his eyes, how proud his father was of this accomplishment. Rabbi Joseph Lookstein had been pursuing his own PhD in sociology from Columbia University when World War II broke out, and he became too busy to complete his dissertation. He therefore constantly urged his son to complete his dissertation. "At my graduation, my father and I marched together. My father was in all of his glory—his son had achieved what he had not achieved and he was so happy."

The timing proved auspicious: two months later, in July 1979, Rabbi Joseph Lookstein passed away. Now solely

*continued on page 36*



responsible for KJ and Ramaz, Rabbi Lookstein found himself challenged him with a myriad of new professional obligations. Had Dean Soloveitchik not been so strict about the deadline, “I never would have finished it,” Rabbi Lookstein explained. But he did finish the doctorate, and subsequently published the revised version as a book entitled *Were We Our Brothers' Keepers?: The Public Response of American Jews to the Holocaust, 1938-1944* (Bridgeport: Hartmore House, 1985).

Based on his own experiences, Rabbi Lookstein has the following advice to current Revel students: “Don’t procrastinate! Get your work done on time. It’s worth the effort!” These words come from an individual who cares deeply about Revel—and has become an instrumental supporter of the school. A member of Revel’s Board of Trustees since its establishment in 1992, Rabbi Lookstein takes pride in the school as a critical resource of Jewish scholarship for the larger Modern Orthodox community.

Rabbi Lookstein, master educator, meeting with children in the Ramaz Lower School.



“My years in the master’s and doctoral programs at Revel were an exciting and exhilarating experience. I discovered my love for Hebrew studies and linguistics under the tutelage of world-renowned scholar and master teacher Dr. Richard Steiner. Dr. Steiner’s rigorous and innovative approach to the study of the language of the Bible has been the inspiration for my research. I am very grateful to Revel and former Dean Arthur Hyman for the generous support I received for my graduate studies.”

ADINA MOSHAVI  
 SENIOR LECTURER, BAR ILAN UNIVERSITY.  
 REVEL MA IN BIBLE (1992);  
 PHD IN BIBLE (2002)



## Giving Opportunities

We invite you to join us in building a vibrant Jewish future as a supporter of Revel through one of the following sponsorship opportunities.

- A gift to create a named faculty chair
- A gift to fund scholarships and fellowships
- A gift to fund faculty or student research
- A gift to sponsor an academic conference
- A gift to sponsor a lecture or school activity

For information about Revel giving opportunities and how you can assure Jewish scholarship for the next generation, please contact:

**David Berger**, dean, 212.592.4270, [dberger@yu.edu](mailto:dberger@yu.edu)

**Mordechai Cohen**, associate dean, 212.592.4270, [cohenm@yu.edu](mailto:cohenm@yu.edu)

Leonard Grunstein, Esq. of Teaneck, NJ has become the newest member of the Revel Board of Overseers. He and his wife, Chana Tambor Grunstein '72YUHS, are generous benefactors of Yeshiva University. Their three children, Eli, Michal and Rachel, as well as their daughter-in-law and sons-in-law, are all graduates of YU schools. Mr. Grunstein has recently published an extensive analysis of the contemporary application of Jewish laws regarding the taking of interest. This analysis reflects his mastery of a complex area of halakhah, his grasp of the challenges raised by the similar strictures of Islamic law and his deep understanding of the workings of Western economies. He is thus not only a valued supporter of Revel; he personifies the intellectual ideals that Revel strives to impart.

**From its founding in 1937** until the 1980's the Bernard Revel Graduate School grew at a steady pace, graduating hundreds of men—and from the 1970's onward women—who went on to pursue distinguished careers related to Jewish studies, especially in academia, Jewish education, and the Rabbinate. In 1991, Revel was threatened with closure due to mounting financial challenges exacerbated by an economic recession. The need to keep the school financially viable was recognized not only by the faculty and hundreds of YU students, but also by individuals within the broader Jewish community who deem academic Jewish studies central to the vision of Torah Umadda. As a result, in 1992 a Revel Board of Trustees (see photo below) was formed consisting of 13 individuals who provided the leadership and financial backing that saved the school and guaranteed its economic viability. Since 1994, Mordecai D. Katz, Esq. (see photo below), a member of the original Revel Board, has been Chairman of the Revel Board of Overseers. (For a full list of its members, see p. 2). With the enthusiastic support of the current Revel Board, Mr. Katz continues to spearhead ongoing initiatives to insure the continued vigor of the school and its programs.

Mordecai D. Katz, Esq., Chairman of the Revel Board of Overseers, with President Richard M. Joel at a reception honoring Dean Berger in March 2012.



The inaugural meeting of Revel's Board of Trustees, formed in March 1992. From left to right: Mr. Moshe Talansky, Dr. Manfred R. Lehmann, Rabbi Haskel Lookstein (see p. 35), Dr. Norman Lamm, Mr. Irwin Shapiro (Chairman, 1992–1994), Ms. E. Billi Ivri, Mr. Ludwig Jesselson, Mr. Ludwig Bravmann, Mr. Mordecai D. Katz (current Chairman).



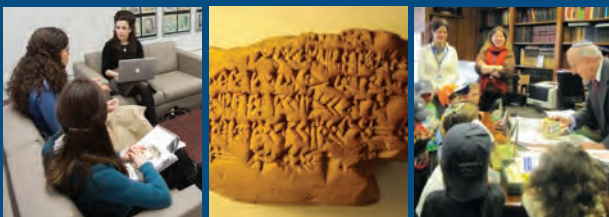
## **BERNARD REVEL GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JEWISH STUDIES**

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY  
500 WEST 185TH STREET, FH325  
NEW YORK, NY 10033

[www.yu.edu/revel](http://www.yu.edu/revel)

## Stay Connected

The fields of academic Jewish studies are constantly evolving. In recent years alone, Jewish scholarship has taken giant steps forward on the basis of newly discovered ancient and medieval manuscripts, new theories proposed, and older ones overturned or substantially revised, making the current face of Jewish scholarship quite different from that of just a generation ago. Revel is proud that our faculty, students and alumni stand at the forefront of these developments. We therefore believe that our combined tasks of advancing academic Jewish learning and educating Jewish scholars and lay leaders continue far beyond the time that students spend enrolled at Revel. That's why we have started the Friends of Revel Society, to open special Revel programs to our graduates and people in the broader community interested in the latest advances in academic Jewish studies.



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Here are five ways you can connect with Revel and stay informed

1. **“Like” the Bernard Revel Graduate School page on Facebook**
  2. **Visit our website at [www.yu.edu/revel](http://www.yu.edu/revel)**
  3. **Visit our blog at [blogs.yu.edu/revel](http://blogs.yu.edu/revel)**
  4. **Email us at [BernardRevelGraduateSchool@gmail.com](mailto:BernardRevelGraduateSchool@gmail.com)**
  5. **Contact us by phone or postal mail to request updates about upcoming events**
- 

Apply to Revel and participate directly in cutting-edge research at a premier center of academic Jewish studies. Contact Revel's Director of Admissions Rona Steinerman at [steinerm@yu.edu](mailto:steinerm@yu.edu) or apply online at [www.yu.edu/admissions/graduate/revel](http://www.yu.edu/admissions/graduate/revel).

For further information, see page 11.