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

## From the Director

Zvi Bekerman



As we open the 2013-2014 academic year at the Melton Centre, it is heartwarming to share that we have 33 new first year students in our MA program and seven students in the renewed one year MA program (in English), which is held in cooperation with the Rothberg International School. In addition, we are also pleased to welcome **Dr. Aviv Cohen** and **Dr. Sarah Pollack**, our two post-doctoral fellows.

The Melton Centre continues to be involved in a range of exciting academic activities: This past summer we hosted "**Jewish Studies on One Foot**" at the Khan Theatre, we were partners in the **International Symposium on The Governance of Religious Diversity: Territorial and Personal Law** held at Hebrew University, and continue to host guest lecturers from around the world for the enrichment of our faculty and students.

While the increase in our student body and the ongoing activities at Melton are very gratifying, we continue to look for ways to attract even more students and to further enhance academic activities so as to offer faculty and students a unique academic experience. Towards these efforts we continue to strengthen our collaboration with

the many resources Hebrew University has to offer to benefit Jewish Education, as well as with other educational institutions both in Israel and abroad. Given the new trends in higher education which point to the growing use of distance learning as part of degree programs, we have started discussions with the academic authorities at Hebrew University to see how Melton courses can be offered online. We are confident that this is one of the main ways to enable educators in Jewish communities abroad to benefit from the Melton Centre, especially those communities which are not, for diverse reasons, able to develop their own training institutes.

The above are a few examples of the many activities we have undertaken as a result of our own internal assessment on how to take the Melton Centre forward. However, much more needs to be done in all that relates to finding ways to overcome the false dichotomy between research in Jewish education and Jewish educational practice. Jewish education as any other field of practice cannot develop without a strong commitment to serious academic research. There are many institutions involved in supporting Jewish education, but what characterizes the activities of the Melton Centre is its commitment to contributing through research to the enhancement and advancement of Jewish education in Israel and abroad.

## Jewish Studies on One Foot at the Khan Theatre

One of the roles of the Melton Centre is to find new educational platforms to bring the breadth and depth of academic Jewish Studies at the Hebrew University to a wide audience. This role was recently expressed to the full in an exciting project launched in conjunction with the London based **JDOV project** and the **Sixteenth Congress of Jewish Studies**.

An evening with four mini-lectures no longer than fifteen minutes delivered by leading scholars in a range of fields of Jewish Studies was held at the Khan Theatre on July 31. The event, inspired by the TED talks concept, was video-recorded and the talks are now available to all on the internet.

The Khan Theatre was chosen as the venue to break with the expectations of an academic event and the special atmosphere of the Khan provided an unusual setting and the theatre was filled to capacity. The talks ranged across a variety of disciplines; Bible, Musicology, Folklore and Rabbinic literature. The speakers responded creatively to the challenge of conveying some significant aspect of their scholarship in a brief time frame.

It is hoped that this will be the first of many projects to use technology to create new formats for Jewish education.

Here are the details of the talks together with the links where they can be found on the internet.



*The Song of Miriam and the Very Idea of Scripture*

**Professor James Kugel**

Bar Ilan University

<http://www.jhub.org.uk/jdov/portfolio/the-song-of-miriam-and-the-very-idea-of-scripture/>



*The Culture War Against Jewish Music*

**Professor Ruth HaCohen**

The Hebrew University

<http://www.jhub.org.uk/jdov/portfolio/the-cultural-war-against-jewish-music/>



*Culturally Decoding the Simchat Torah Flag*

**Professor Shalom Sabar**

The Hebrew University

<http://www.jhub.org.uk/jdov/portfolio/culturally-decoding-the-simchat-torah-flag/>



*Midrash: Commentary or Prophecy?*

**Professor Marc Hirshman**

The Hebrew University

<http://www.jhub.org.uk/jdov/portfolio/midrash-commentary-or-prophecy/>

## International Symposium on the Governance of Religious Diversity: Territorial and Personal Law

During the month of October the Hebrew University hosted an International Symposium on **The Governance of Religious Diversity: Territorial and Personal Law**. The Conference was organized by the research group Cultural Rights and Diversity (GIDD) of the University of Barcelona in collaboration with The Melton Centre and the International Center for University Teaching of Jewish Civilization from the Hebrew University, and the Don Juan de Borbon Spain-Israel Foundation and the Spain-Israel University Chair of Rey Juan Carlos University in Spain.

The objective of the Symposium was to provide a forum for critical dialogue on issues relating to the governance of diversity. For countries characterized by internal cultural, ethnic or religious diversity, this topic is particularly interesting. As such the Hebrew University of Jerusalem was a fitting venue to hold such a symposium where questions such as "Can the application of the personal principle to diverse groups facilitate peaceful coexistence in a plural state?" were asked, and also provided the opportunity to debate the resolution of conflicts in which human rights are put at risk.

**Dr. Zvi Bekerman**, Director of the Melton Centre, was a member of the Scientific Committee and gave a lecture on "Religious diversity and multicultural education in Israel".

## Professor Martin Ubani Enjoys Fruitful Collaboration with The Melton Centre



**Martin Ubani**, Ph.D, MTh, Professor of Religious Education at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Eastern Finland has been a guest at the Melton Centre on numerous occasions. His main collaboration has been with **Dr. Michael Gillis** on research proposals and he also participated in a conference co-hosted by the Melton Centre on "Pluralist Jewish Education: Trends and Challenges". For Martin, these opportunities have proven significant in so many ways, especially in his work in Finland with student teachers in Jewish Education. "I have benefited from my connection to the Melton Centre by learning more about Jewish educational thought through academic discussions, visiting Jewish schools and the research going on at Hebrew University. I have also contributed to Dr. Gillis' research on dialogue in education with a Finnish comparative case."

In 2012 Dr. Ubani and Dr. Gillis gave a joint presentation on "How Jesus' Jewish background is presented in Israeli and in Finnish education materials" at the International Religious Education and Values (ISREV) Conference in Finland. Dr. Ubani points out that "Michael's work drew exceptional interest from the likes of John Hull and other researchers of Religious Education."

Martin's research interests focus mainly on issues such as religious education and classroom pedagogy and teacher education in religious education. He recently shifted his focus to religions, multicultural education and meaningful learning. His professorship belongs to two schools: School of Theology and School of Applied Sciences of Education and Teacher Education.

For Martin his connection with the Melton Centre is invaluable. "I am greatly indebted to the Melton family and especially to **Michael, Zvi, Gabriel, and Anat** who have provided all the support necessary, and have made me feel welcome even when university life is in full-swing. I hope that our connection and cooperation will remain positive and be fruitful."



## Meet Our Two Post-Doctoral Fellows



**Dr. Aviv Cohen**

**Dr. Aviv Cohen** recently completed his PhD at Teachers College, Columbia University. Aviv's academic career began in the Political Science and Archaeology Departments at Hebrew University and his dream was to be an archaeologist. However, he soon realized his interest lay more in the present than in the past and so he went on to do his Masters in Civic Education at the Gilo Center in the Department of Political Science while studying at the same time for a teaching certificate in Civics at the School of Education. He completed his MA in 2007 with a thesis on the subject of "The use of knowledge of the Land as a means for civic education". Here he focused on the meaning of being a citizen of the Land of Israel, the connection to the Land and using the Land as an educational tool. This research recently became a chapter in a book, "Civic Education in Israel", edited by Dan Avnon.

The roots to Aviv's research were already in place in his high school days when he was an active member of Green Horizons (Chuggei Sayarut), a Youth Movement that focuses on learning about the country, using field trips to discover and understand the country on all its levels, and to create a strong emotional bond to the land.

With his Masters completed, Aviv moved to New York to do his PhD in Social Studies Education at Teachers College. His dissertation, "Conceptions of Citizenship and Civic Education: Lessons from Three Israeli Civics Classrooms" was the culmination of research he carried out in Israel. Aviv followed three civics teachers in their classrooms in different Jerusalem high schools and focused on the ways in which the teachers' personal civic ideologies translated into their teaching.

Aviv, a self-confessed 'stranger in New York' despite spending many of his formative years in the United States, also used this time to look at his own identity through different lenses. How does his Jewish identity interact with his Israeli identity? In New York, does he identify more with his fellow Arab student, an Israeli citizen from Haifa, or with a Jewish New Yorker? Why does Israel not have a civic language - with concepts, terms and ideas specific to the county - like they do in the US? All these questions and so many more led him to submit an application to do his post-doc research at the Melton Centre, as he had heard so much about **Dr. Zvi Bekerman's** research in Civic Education.

Aviv is involved in a number of educational initiatives, both national and international, and serves on the editorial boards of The Journal of Social Science Education and The Journal of International Social Studies. He is a keen traveler, both in Israel and abroad, with a special love of the Old City of Jerusalem. When asked where he is heading, Aviv is quick to respond that his future is in research in Civic Education. Aviv is honored to have received the opportunity to return home to Jerusalem to further his research in Civic Education at the Melton Centre. As the new academic year begins, he is enthusiastic about what this year holds for him, the opportunities ahead and the contribution he can make.



**Dr. Sarah Pollack**

**Dr. Sarah Pollack** began her academic career in the field of computer sciences, far from the corridors of Jewish Education. Yet, the leitmotif that links her studies and research in the humanistic and computer science fields is her belief that education should focus on nurturing students' agency, to assist them to realize and maximize their power to author their world. In particular, the ability and will to cope with alternative voices, viewpoints and differing perspectives, and to learn from encounters with these voices, is an important asset in the age of globalization and digitalization. This agenda was salient in her work both as an educator and a researcher.

Alongside her studies, Sarah also worked as a teacher, a developer of curriculum and educational materials and in-service teacher training at The Center for Educational Technology (CET), the Technological School in the Open University, and the Department of Science Teaching at the Weizmann Institute of Science. After completing her BSc in computerized systems at Tel Aviv University she continued on to her MSc at The Weizmann Institute, focusing on the encounter between the school's authoritative voice, which encourages students to adopt the computer scientists' community's practices, and the students' tendency towards users' practices and adopting the trial and error approach prevalent amongst computer users.

Sarah's crossing from Computer Science to the field of Humanities began when she was introduced to history education mediated by technology. She found history to be a fascinating venue to engage

students in a sincere dialogue because of its multiplicity and interpretive nature. In her PhD studies at the School of Education at Hebrew University, Sarah aimed at understanding learning processes within an environment that encourages dialogue and encourages students to re-examine their voice(s) – the individual's cognition, beliefs, opinions, world views – in light of alternatives, even conflicting voices. She designed an instructional model for Arab and Jewish children in Israeli high schools to collaboratively e-investigate the shared troubled past of their in-groups.

Sarah's dissertation was written as a compilation of articles and was approved in March 2013. Her studies have already been published in two journals and as two chapters in books and she has participated in numerous conferences.

When the Melton Centre advertised an opening for a post-doctoral fellowship, Sarah knew this was the best place to further her studies. She hopes to take advantage of her year at Melton to delve further into collaborative learning and all its aspects, including the Jewish one of "havruta" and to concentrate on a new collaborative learning project for school children – "Interlaced Roots". In this project children, from different ethnic backgrounds, investigate their families' histories in pairs. We are sure that Sarah's year at Melton will be mutually beneficial.

Sarah is married to **Avi**, and they have a son, **Shlomi**, two daughters, **Tali** and **Maayan**, and six grandchildren. Besides her work and her academic activities, she makes sure to spend time with her family and grandchildren, to read, to go to the theatre and to enjoy trips around Israel.

## Melton Faculty Seminar with Dr. Jeffrey Schein

Melton Centre faculty recently enjoyed a seminar with **Dr. Jeffrey Schein**, on "the values of spiritual peoplehood".

Dr. Schein, from Siegal College in Cleveland is visiting the Melton Centre for five weeks during which time he will be revisiting the central construct of his educational work in the Reconstructionist movement. He has received a grant from the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture and hopes to glean from his conversations and study with Melton faculty members a sharpened sense of the shape and content of the book he will be writing over the next five years.



Dr. Schein has served for 20 years as a faculty member and director of the masters program in Jewish education at Siegal College in Cleveland. He was an education director of congregations for many years and director of the program in Jewish Education at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College.

## Announcing The Melton Centre Images of Jewish Education Contest

The Melton Centre, a leader in Jewish Education, encourages excellence and creativity in the field. As such we are pleased to announce the launch of The Melton Centre Annual Contest on Images of Sites and Practices in Jewish Education. We look forward to receiving entries from Jewish educators, lay-people and students around the world, which reflect the way they perceive Jewish education in its various manifestations.

For further information on this contest please go to:  
<http://melton.huji.ac.il/index.php/en/academic-activities/images-contest>

Send your best photo or image of formal, informal or non-formal education to [adminmelton@mail.huji.ac.il](mailto:adminmelton@mail.huji.ac.il) to reach us by no later than January 7, 2014. Only original images will be accepted and will be posted on The Melton Centre's Facebook page. The image with the most "likes" will be the winner of the contest. The image together with an interview with the photographer or creator will be featured in the next Melton newsletter.



## Admin Profile: Fabian Glagovsky



**Fabian Glagovsky**, administrator of the online educational platform at the Melton Centre has taken an interesting route to the Hebrew University and Jewish Education. Fabian, who has a BA in History from the University of Buenos Aires, had no special connection to Israel, Jewish Education nor was he particularly involved in Jewish life in Argentina. However, he happened to go one evening to Hillel House where he met **Yagil Kleiner**, the Jewish Agency *shaliach*. Interested in furthering his studies, Yagil offered to help Fabian obtain a scholarship to study in Israel. In 2003, with scholarship in hand, Fabian arrived at Tel Aviv University to start his MA in Political Science and International Relations.

While working as a teaching assistant at Tel Aviv University, he met **Dr. Marcelo Dorfsman**, who in 2006 brought him to Melton to work on special projects in online education for the Melamed Program for teacher training in Argentina. As Fabian got more involved in these projects, he began to realize the importance of the work and his part in training a new generation of teachers in Latin America. In 2007 he began to work under Marcelo's guidance, developing online courses, the website and all educational technology at Melton.

Despite not planning on staying in Israel for more than the time needed to finish his MA studies, once living in Israel he fell in love with the land and life in the country and the temporary became permanent. In 2004 he returned to Argentina to marry his girlfriend Adela, and together they came back to Israel. They have two daughters **Nadia** (5) and **Ela** (4). Fabian enjoys the work environment at Melton, and Jewish education has become an integral part of his life. So much so that he became a Melton Centre student, and thanks to a three-year long scholarship from **The Liwerant Center for the Study of Latin America, Spain, Portugal and their Jewish Communities**, he is studying towards a PhD under the supervision and assistance of **Prof. Gabi Horenczyk, Dr. Yossi Goldstein and Dr. Marc Silverman.**"

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### **kol hamercaz**

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## The Child is a Person Janusz Korczak's Educational Thought



*On November 6, Dr. Marc Silverman's book **The Child is a Person** was launched at a symposium held at the Beit Maierdorf Faculty Club at the Hebrew University. The evening was attended by colleagues, friends and family. Prof. Jonathan Cohen and Prof. Shmuel Shkolnikov discussed some of the issues raised by the book followed by a response from Dr. Silverman.*

**About the book:** A broad consensus exists among people familiar with Janusz Korczak's life, work and writings that he was a highly gifted, original and exceptional pedagogue – one of the twentieth century's outstanding humanist educators. This consensus notwithstanding, Korczak is not usually considered a theorist or philosopher of the first rank.

A concentrated attempt to consolidate and formulate his educational positions and practices into a philosophical-educational theory, based on an analysis and interpretation of his literary and pedagogical works, is absent in Hebrew works on Korczak's educational thought and humanist legacy. This book aspires to fill this gap and foster a process that will give Korczak the place he deserves among the leading philosophers of education of the past and of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in particular. No less and perhaps even more importantly, portraying and re-presenting Korczak as an innovative progressive educational thinker and practitioner to an informed and reflective Israeli public will hopefully contribute to reshaping his reputation in the eyes of this public by moving away from the almost exclusive focus on his last years of his life as a Holocaust hero in the Warsaw ghetto (1940-1942) to encountering him as a world-class educator who lived a very rich professional life over more than 40 years. To this day Korczak's legacy makes significant contributions to progressive-humanist education world-wide. In this context, it is fair to say that contributing to 'making' this real Korczak stand-up without his 'mythic' garb, is an important dimension of this book's originality.

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