**THANK YOU, BEREL**

_by Shaye J.D. Cohen, Director, Nathan Littauer Professor of Hebrew Literature and Philosophy_

On behalf of all of us at the Center for Jewish Studies, I would like to personally thank Professor Bernard “Berel” Septimus for assuming the Directorship of the Center during my sabbatical last spring. I had the good fortune of being away during a particularly difficult and stressful time, as all centers, departments, and schools were under strong pressure from the central administration to help alleviate the financial problems of the university. In innumerable meetings with deans of all stripes, Berel was able to negotiate the tricky challenge of being a faithful custodian of the Center’s assets while also being a good corporate citizen of the university. Thank you, Berel. We appreciate the time and energy you devoted to the Center.

—Shaye Cohen

**Student NEWS**

**UNDERGRADUATE PRIZES**

The Center for Jewish Studies at Harvard University is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2009 Norman Podhoretz Prize in Jewish Studies and the 2009 Selma and Lewis Weinstein Prize in Jewish Studies.

**JONATHAN GOULD** ’10, a senior in Eliot House, won last year’s Norman Podhoretz Prize in Jewish Studies for his essay, “Pluralism, Education, and Acculturation: The Scopes Trial and American Jewish Life in the 1920’s.” This award “is given to the Harvard University student who submits the best essay, feature article, or short story on a Jewish theme. A tribute to Norman Podhoretz, editor of Commentary magazine from 1960 to 1995, the prize is sponsored by the Ernest H. Weiner Fund at the American Jewish Committee.”

**SAMUEL JACOBY** ’09, a graduate in Pforzheimer House and **JACOB VICTOR** ’09, a graduate in Leverett House, both won last year’s Selma and Lewis Weinstein Prize in Jewish Studies. Samuel Jacoby’s entry was “Rabbi Abendana’s *Kuzari*: The Story of a Book in 17th Century Amsterdam” and Jacob Victor’s entry was “A Sort of Columbus to Those Near-at-Hand: The Cultural Vision of Saul Bellow”. The Weinstein Prize, which is given to the Harvard University student or students who submit the best undergraduate essay in Jewish studies, was established by Lewis H. Weinstein, A.B. 1927, LL.B. 1930.

Cover Photo: Bernard (Berel) Septimus is Jacob E. Safra Professor of Jewish History and Sephardic Civilization and teaches courses on Talmud, medieval Judaeo-Arabic and Jewish thought.
Eve Levavi Feinstein’s interest in Jewish studies began when she was growing up in New York’s Upper West side. “I was always surrounded by Jewish texts” she explains, between growing up in an observant Jewish household, attending a Jewish day school and synagogue. It was the historical contexts and historical meanings of the Bible that particularly caught her attention. In college at Brandeis University, Eve majored in Near Eastern and Judaic Studies, studied with Professor Marc Brettler, and focused her academic work on the Bible and the Ancient Near East.

Now a Ph.D. candidate in the Hebrew Bible program in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Eve hopes to complete her doctoral dissertation this year. Eve’s dissertation focuses on the concepts of sexual pollution and purity, exploring the texts in the Hebrew Bible that use purity and pollution language to describe sexual relationships that are considered problematic. She explains that one of her major findings is that sexual pollution is not synonymous with sexual transgression. For example, sexual transgression is always attributed to the female partner, even if the woman is a victim. In Deut 24:4, sexual pollution is attributed to a woman, even when there doesn’t seem to be any transgression at all. In this case, a man is not allowed to remarry an ex-wife if she had been married to another man after they had originally divorced (and prior to the proposed remarriage). The language of this text seems to indicate that some kind of contamination had taken place in the woman while she was married to her second husband that would make her unworthy for the first. In Genesis 34, in which Shechem is accused of violating Dina, his actions are described as having polluted her.

Grateful for the many resources at Harvard that have helped Eve in her academic pursuits, she offers special praise to her advisor, Professor Peter Machinist, for all his help with her project. “He’s been great! He gets very involved with students’ work.” Eve also points out that Professor Cohen was particularly helpful in helping her to focus her dissertation topic. In addition, she notes that the coursework and faculty at Harvard have provided her with a strong grounding in aspects of the field that would not have been possible elsewhere. She is also grateful for the spirit of collegiality among her group of graduate student friends, and for the funding from the CJS that enabled her to study German in Germany last summer and is providing her with a Dissertation Completion Fellowship this year. When she graduates, Eve Levavi Feinstein hopes to continue to conduct research in her field and to teach at a university.
ABOVE: Asya Vaisman has a few words with Starr Fellow Rebekka Voss at the CJS/NELC reception.

LEFT: Acting Director Bernard Septimus chats with Silver Fellow Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt

BELOW: CJS Assistant Brenna Wells shares some time with Ann Cooper, Student Coordinator for NEIC and NEIC student Yaron Klein at the CJS/NEIC reception.
CJS EVENTS 2009

The Harvard University Center for Jewish Studies

A.B. YEHO SHUA
Author discussed his latest novel

“From Mythology to History: From Mr. Mani to Friendly Fire”
Monday, April 20, 2009

Alan and Elizabeth Doft Lecture and Publication Fund

The Harvard University Center for Jewish Studies and the Post-Medieval Judaism Workshop

EITAN FISHBANE
Assistant Professor of Jewish Philosophy, Jewish Theological Seminary

“Encounters Along the Way: Narrative Technique and Mystical Discovery in the Zohar”
Thursday, May 7, 2009

Yanoff-Taylor Lecture and Publication Fund

SPECIAL RECEPTION
CJS and the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations held a joint reception to welcome Spring 2009 Visiting Scholars. Open to students, faculty and visitors, this reception was held on February 24, 2009 and enjoyed by both departments.
OPPOSITE PAGE: There was a large attendance at Dr. A.B. Yehoshua’s talk on April 20, 2009.

ABOVE: Members of CJS and Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations enjoyed a joint reception in the First Floor Semitic Museum Gallery

BELOW: Dr. A.B. Yehoshua and Tehilla Altschuler share a post-lecture moment.
The Chief Rabbi of Moscow, Pinchas Goldschmidt, spent the spring 2009 semester at the Center for Jewish Studies as our fourteenth Daniel Jeremy Silver Fellow. This fellowship was established in memory of Rabbi Daniel Jeremy Silver (’48), to enable an “active congregational rabbi who has demonstrated exceptional intellectual and academic interest, originality, and energy” to engage in full-time academic research at Harvard.

During his stay at Harvard, Rabbi Goldschmidt worked on a study entitled “The Changing Face of the European Rabbinate: A Study of the Struggle for the Soul of the Jewish Communities in Europe at the Turn of the 21st Century” and worked closely with faculty at the Davis Center for Russian Studies.

Daniel Jeremy Silver Fellow

Visiting Researchers

Harry Starr Fellows in Judaica
(No specified topic; open to post-doctoral fellows)

Yaacov Deutsch, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Princeton University (spring semester)
David Gurley, University of California, Berkeley (academic year)
Gil Klein, Cambridge University (Wolfson College), Franklin and Marshall College, (spring semester)
Micha Perry, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, UCLA Center for Jewish Studies (spring semester)
Jordan Rosenblum, Brown University (spring semester)
Rebekka Voss, Heinrich Heine University, Barillan University (academic year)

Below: Starr Fellows (L-R): Jordan Rosenblum, Micha Perry, Yaakov Deutsch, Rebekka Voss, Grant (David) Gurley, and Gil Klein
VISITING PROFESSORS

The Center for Jewish Studies hosted **ISAIAH M. GAFNI**, Sol Rosenbloom Professor of Jewish History at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, as our Gerard Weinstock Visiting Professor of Jewish Studies during the spring 2009 semester.

With the support of visiting professorships and certain other endowment funds, the Center is able to host leading scholars in Jewish studies to supplement the courses offered by our full-time faculty at Harvard. Professor Gafni garnered rave reviews from his students. He taught two classes, “Land, Center, and Diaspora in Ancient Judaism” and “History and Historiography in Rabbinic Literature.”

FELLOWS & POST-DOCTORAL FELLOWS

**FU XIAOWEI**, Sichuan International Studies University (China)

**TEHILLA ALTSCHULER**, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

**AVIRAM RAVITZKY**, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

**ASSOCIATES**

**YAAKOV ELMAN**, Yeshiva University

**AARON KATCHEN**, Independent scholar

ABOVE: Acting CJS Director Bernard Septimus enjoys a chat with a few Start Fellows at the reception

INSET: CJS Associate Yaakov Elman
HARRY STARR FELLOWSHIP IN JUDAICA

February 18, 2009
YAACOV DEUTSCH
“‘When Ropes He Pulls, With Rubbish He’s Full’—Jewish Responses to Christianity in the Medieval and Early Modern Period”

February 25, 2009
MICHA PERRY
“The Imaginary War Between Prester John and Eldad the Danite and Its Implications on Medieval Reality”

March 4, 2009
DAVID (GANTT) GURLEY
“Gestures Toward the Modern: Meir Aaron Goldschmidt and the Birth of Jewish Realism”

March 11, 2009
REBEKKA VOSS
“Why are the Jews Beyond the Sambatyon Red? A Christian Motif in Jewish Exile”

March 18, 2009
JORDAN ROSENBLUM
“The ‘Goy’ of Cooking: Jew and Non-Jew in the Tannaitic Kitchen”

April 29, 2009
GIL KLEIN
“Sages on Couches: The Architecture of Roman Triclinia and Rabbinic Notions of Sacred Time and Space”

HARRY STARR FELLOWSHIP IN JUDAICA

We welcomed our fifteenth group of Harry Starr Fellows in Judaica for the 2008-2009 academic year. This fellowship was established with a generous bequest from the estate of Harry Starr, ’21, former president of the Lucius Littauer Foundation of New York, to support a group of scholars from around the world to gather at Harvard to engage in full-time research in Judaica.

Though the Executive Committee of the Center normally designates a subject area within the field of Jewish studies around which the Starr Fellowship is organized, every few years we leave the topic open and invite a group emerging new scholars in Jewish studies to come to Harvard as Post-Doctoral Fellows.

Last year, we hosted a vibrant and diverse group of Post-Doctoral Fellows from around the world. Here they were able to share their research with each other as well as with members of the Harvard community. Their weekly presentations throughout the spring semester spanned a wide range of topics (see list of Starr Seminars) and elicited lively discussions. This group of Starr Fellows was particularly thankful for the opportunity the fellowship provided to concentrate on their research and publications with access to all the resources Harvard has to offer. Many commented on the importance of this experience in helping to their academic careers in Jewish studies.
GRADUATE STUDENT FELLOWSHIPS
ACADEMIC YEAR 2008-2009

Gabriela Berzin (NELC), Raphael and Deborah Melamed Fellowship
Debra Caplan (NELC), Lewis and Alice Schimberg Graduate Student Fellowship
Jessica Fechtor (NELC), Sidney L. Solomon Endowed Fellowship
Ari Finkelstein (NELC), Leo Flax Fellowship in Jewish Studies
David Flatto (NELC), Alan M. Stroock Family Fellowship for Advanced Research in Judaica
Jennifer Heilbrunner (NELC), Sosland Family Fellowship
Kelly Johnson (NELC), Raphael and Deborah Melamed Fellowship//Mandell Berman Fellowship
Mihaly Kalman (NELC), Sidney L. Solomon Endowed Fellowship
Hilary Kapfer (NELC), Leo Flax Fellowship in Jewish Studies
Jonathan Kaplan (NELC), Isadore Tversky Fellowship
Eitan Kensing (NELC), Lewis and Alice Schimberg Graduate Student Fellowship
Shana Komittee (Ad-Hoc), Sosland Family Fellowship
Jared (Yehuda) Kurzer (NELC), Alan M. Stroock Family Fellowship for Advanced Research in Judaica
Marcie Lenk (Religion), Alan M. Stroock Family Fellowship for Advanced Research in Judaica
Evan Mayse (NELC), Lewis and Alice Schimberg Graduate Student Fellowship
Meital Orr (NELC), Sidney L. Solomon Endowed Fellowship
Elisha Russ-Fishbane (NELC), Alan M. Stroock Family Fellowship for Advanced Research in Judaica
Adam Strich (NELC), Aaron Rabinowitz Fellowship
Christine Thomas (NELC), Center for Jewish Studies Fellowship
Ester-Basya Vaisman (NELC), Alan M. Stroock Family Fellowship for Advanced Research in Judaica

GRADUATE SUMMER FUNDING
2009

Debra Caplan (NELC), Edward H. Kavinoky Fellowship, Lewis and Alice Schimberg Graduate Student Fellowship
Eve Feinstein (NELC), Anna Marnoy Feldberg Fellowship
Ari Finkelstein (NELC), Barney and Anne B. Malloy Fellowship
Kelly Johnson (NELC), Anna Marnoy Feldberg Fellowship
Jonathan Kaplan (NELC), Edward H. Kavinoky Fellowship
Mihaly Kalman (NELC), Anna Marnoy Feldberg Fellowship
Jonathan Kaplan (NELC), Edward H. Kavinoky Fellowship
Luke Leadgten (Literature and Comparative Literature), Anna Marnoy Feldberg Fellowship
Jonathan Lipnick (Religion), Barney and Anne B. Malloy Fellowship
Evan Ariel Mayse (NELC), Barney and Anne B. Malloy Fellowship
Sreemati Mitter (History), Barney and Anne B. Malloy Fellowship
Alexendar (Sasha) Senderovich (Sovlic), Barney and Anne B. Malloy Fellowship
Sara Yudkoff (NELC), Edward H. Kavinoky Fellowship

UNDERGRADUATE AWARDS FOR THE HARVARD SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAM IN JERUSALEM
2008

Gracye Chang, Hertog Fund for Undergraduate Study Abroad
Matthew Cohen, Hertog Fund for Undergraduate Study Abroad
Joy Goldstein, Hertog Fund for Undergraduate Study Abroad
Karen Johnson, Hertog Fund for Undergraduate Study Abroad
Emmott Kistler, Hertog Fund for Undergraduate Study Abroad
Joseph Mendelbaum, Hertog Fund for Undergraduate Study Abroad
Wyatt Gelichauf, Hertog Fund for Undergraduate Study Abroad
Jake McCouley, Hertog Fund for Undergraduate Study Abroad
Jonathan Mizrahi, Hertog Fund for Undergraduate Study Abroad
Abishai Vase, Hertog Fund for Undergraduate Study Abroad
Jonathan Warshe, Hertog Fund for Undergraduate Study Abroad
Rachel Zax, Hertog Fund for Undergraduate Study Abroad