

# Philip and Muriel Berman Center for Jewish Studies



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Newsletter

Lehigh University  
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Marjorie Agosin



Karen Alkalay-Gut

## Berman Center's Writer-in-Residence Program Brings Jewish Writers to Campus

In January 2001, Dr. **Ruth Knafo Setton**, novelist, creative writer, and poet, joined the faculty of the Berman Center for Jewish Studies as writer-in-residence. The newly created position, which was made possible through the generosity of Susan Ballenzweig Beckerman, has significantly broadened the range of Lehigh's Jewish Studies program. Besides teaching courses on Jewish and Israeli literature, Setton is responsible for arranging readings and lectures that bring Jewish writers and speakers of varying perspectives to campus.

According to Center Director, Laurence J. Silberstein, "Having a novelist and poet as a member of our faculty opens up all kinds of new possibilities. Ruth's creativity, her talent as a writer, and her personal contacts with Jewish writers here and abroad have already generated a number of literary programs. In addition to her courses in Jewish literature, which have attracted a large student following, her passion for writing and literature enables the Berman Center to explore areas of Jewish culture in ways not previously available." Setton and Silberstein are currently planning a major international conference on "The Borders and Boundaries of Contemporary Jewish Writing" scheduled to take place at Lehigh in May 2003.

Barry Kroll, chair of Lehigh's Dept. of English, believes the Berman Center's writer-in-residence program has already increased the visibility of writing on Lehigh's campus and enhanced the English Department's ability to support those students who are committed to creative writing as part of their undergraduate work. "English majors who are pursuing a concentration in writing have benefitted greatly from the writer-in-residence pro-

gram, especially from the courses taught by Setton herself. Ruth is not only an inspiring teacher but she brings an expertise in fiction writing that the department has lacked in recent years. Ruth has also been active in bringing to campus a series of writers who have given public readings and, in addition, been willing to meet with students in creative writing classes or informal settings," Kroll said.

Since January, Setton has arranged for three Jewish authors to read their work at Lehigh—**Marjorie Agosin**, a Jewish Latina whose writing focuses on human rights issues; **Karen Alkalay-Gut**, an American-Israeli whose poetry reveals the ironies of contemporary Jewish life, particularly in Israel; and **Daniel Paley Ellison**, a poet-photographer who combines both genre to bear witness to cultures who have endured immense suffering.

The interdisciplinary nature of the programs organized by Setton was apparent in Marjorie Agosin's recent reading at Lehigh. Five academic departments—the Berman Center, Dept. of English, Women's Center, Women's Studies Program, and Dept. of Modern Languages and Literature—cooperated in sponsoring her visit. The descendant of European Jews who fled the Holocaust and settled in Chile, Agosin is a professor of Spanish literature at Wellesley College and the author of more than twenty volumes of fiction, memoir, and poetry. Her writings focus on her multicultural heritage and the struggles of women in contemporary society. Among her concerns are the problems faced by Jewish Latinos, especially the difficulties associated with hiding their religion and establishing community.

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## Berman Center Series “New Perspectives on Jewish Studies” Adds Volume on Hebrew Literary Canon



Hannan Hever

The Berman Center is proud to announce the publication of our most recent volume, *Producing the Modern Hebrew Canon: Nation Building and Minority Discourse*, by Dr. **Hannan Hever**, Associate Professor of Poetics and Comparative Literature at Tel Aviv University. Available from New York University Press this winter, it is the first volume by a single author to be published in our series “New Perspectives on Jewish Studies.” Like the five previous series’ volumes, Hever’s book provides a theoretically informed, interdisciplinary discussion of a basic dimension of the field of Jewish Studies.

Imaginatively applying insights derived from literary theory, philosophy, and post-colonial studies, Hever frames a new and provocative interpretation of Hebrew literary production. Sensitive to the role of power in cultural production, a dimension usually overlooked in conventional studies of Hebrew and Israeli literature, he explores the dynamic formation of what emerged as the “canon” of Israeli literature—those texts that occupy an honored place in the repertoire of Israeli culture. Simultaneously, he follows the peripheral, minor voices excluded from the canon, which play a significant role in the creation of the national canon. In the process, he provides a fresh and exciting perspective on Israeli culture.

“The development of modern Hebrew literature provides a dramatic example of the production of Israel’s national imagination,” writes Hever in his Introduction. “Within the dominant modes of Israeli literary interpretation, the process of nation building is depicted as a coherent and progressive one in which the widely dispersed Jewish people is configured into a sovereign nation. However, a careful reading of the literary historical narrative reveals moments of rupture and reversal that undermine and divert efforts to construct a hegemonic Zionist story.”

In his opinion, this Zionist “cover story” (which called for the creation of a national culture for a national majority living in its own historical territory) repressed and excluded social, ethnic, and national minorities, including Palestinians, Arabic Jews, and even those Hebrew writers living in Eastern Europe between the two world wars.

*Producing the Modern Hebrew Canon* offers a sweeping view of the political and cultural development of Hebrew literature, tracing the transition from Hebrew literature written in exile in the Diaspora to Israeli literature written in the nation-state of Israel. The discussion moves from M. Y. Berdichevsky and S. Y. Agnon, writing in the Diaspora early in the 20th century, to A. B. Yehoshua and Amos Oz, whose stories are situated in the center of the canon of Israeli literature in the sixties, to Emil Habibi and Anton Shammas in the eighties, Israeli Palestinian authors whose writings in Hebrew changed the ethnic boundaries of the Hebrew literary canon and broke the identification of Hebrew literature with Jewish ethnicity.

Hannan Hever, who received his Ph.D. from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, has published widely on the relationship between politics and literature. His publications in Hebrew include *Literature Written from Here: A Short History of Israeli Literature*; *Captive of Utopia: An Essay on Messianism and Politics in Hebrew Poetry in Eretz Israel between the Two World Wars*; and *Zealots and Poets*:

## Faculty Colloquia on Judaism and Postmodern Culture

A concern of the Berman Center since its inception has been to open avenues of inquiry and investigation in Jewish Studies that critically explore and apply theoretical insights drawn from such areas as post-modern, postcolonial, and poststructuralist theory. In May 1992, following a Berman Center conference on “The Other in Jewish Thought and History,” a small group of colleagues remained for a day to discuss and debate the relevance of theoretical developments in the humanities to the field of Jewish Studies. As an outgrowth of that discussion, the Berman Center has hosted a series of colloquia on the general theme of Judaism and postmodern culture.

A group of scholars, usually numbering between nine and fifteen, comes together at the Center to discuss papers or work in progress submitted by members of the group. Works that seek to expand the current boundaries of Jewish Studies inquiry are particularly encouraged. In the course of the day-and-a-half meeting, one session is devoted to a theoretical article drawn from other fields. Over the years, the group has discussed topics such as Levinas and feminist critique; the Jew as other in postmodern theory; the concept of authenticity in Jewish identity discourse; eco-orientalism: Zionist representations of space and place; politics, aesthetics, and reality in the writings of Yaakov Shabtai; postzionism and the critique of power; Jacqueline Kahanoff: images of colonialism/postcolonialism; Yiddish language, myth, and the construction of identity; and Holocaust museums as mediators and producers of cultural identity.

To the participants, many of whom return regularly, this series of colloquia has provided a “safe space” in which colleagues can explore, imagine, and debate the implications of diverse theoretical frameworks for the understanding and interpretation of Judaism.

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*The Rise of Political Hebrew Poetry.* His essays have appeared in English in such journals as *Cultural Critique*, *Tikkun*, *Prooftexts*, and *Contemporary Theater Review*.



# Israeli Academician Urges His Country End Silence on Nuclear Weapons

In his 1998 book *Israel and the Bomb*, former Tel Aviv University professor **Avner Cohen** broke the code of silence surrounding Israel's nuclear weapons capacity and provided the first detailed account of Israel's development of nuclear power. In a lecture cosponsored by the Berman Center and Lehigh's International Relations Dept. and Science, Technology and Society Program, Cohen recounted Israel's entry into the nuclear age.

The sixth nation in the world and the first in the Middle East to develop the bomb, Israel has never publicly declared that it possesses nuclear weapons. "The bomb was not just kept out of sight," Cohen said, "but it was kept out of discourse." He questions the effect of this policy on Israel's democratic character and how long such a policy can be sustained without doing permanent damage to this character.

Every democratic nation, Cohen ex-

plained, has had to confront the essential tension between the foundations of democracy and the secrecy required for the development of nuclear weapons. Such secrecy, by no means an Israeli invention, was an aspect of every nuclear weapons program. In contrast to the Israeli situation, in most nations the secrecy ended when the capability was reached.

According to Cohen, decisions regarding the development of nuclear weapons, from research through deployment, are among the most fateful that a state can make and have long-range effects in such areas as national security, politics, and employee health issues. Insofar as Israel allows no public discourse regarding the facts of its nuclear capacity, indeed not even acknowledging this capacity, there can be no informed debate, no asking of tough questions, and no system of checks and balances—all fundamental aspects of democracy.

Most Israelis, in Cohen's opinion, view their country's policy of nuclear "opacity" as a success story. It allows Israel to have nuclear weapons without paying a price for them, politically and internationally, while not giving much incentive to others, in particular the Arabs, to also develop nuclear weapons. Further, the United States government, viewing the matter as the lesser of two evils, looks the other way. Nuclear "opacity" has been the Israeli contribution to the legacy of the nuclear age, Cohen added. It became the *modus operandi* of all second-generation nuclear proliferators after Israel.

Cohen admitted that many Israelis feel there is no alternative to opacity at present and that attempting to change this policy could harm American-Israeli relations and cause repercussions in the Middle East. In spite of that, in recent talks in Israel and the U.S., he has urged that Israel look for an alternative to opacity—a creative way

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## Rebecca Lesses Discusses "Lilith and Other Demons"

"Lilith and Other Demons" was the topic of a lecture presented by Dr. **Rebecca Lesses** and sponsored by the Berman Center and the Paul Levy Fund in Jewish Studies. Currently Jewish Studies Distinguished Scholar-in-Residence at Bucknell University, Lesses is the author of *Ritual Practices to Gain Power: Angels, Incantations, and Revelation in Early Jewish Mysticism*.

In her presentation, Lesses explored both verbal and pictorial depictions of women, liliths, and other female demonic figures on Aramaic incantation bowls from Mesopotamia. She also discussed what these bowls reveal to the representations of rabbinic culture in the Talmud and midrash. Recorded in Jewish legend as the first wife of Adam, Lilith has been long regarded as a demon and slayer of children. While Lesses said that Lilith is not a particularly prominent figure in rabbinic literature, she provided several examples of rabbinic texts that point to a figure

much like the female lilith on the incantation bowls.

Scholars usually date the bowls, found in ancient sites in Iraq and Iran, to the fourth to seventh centuries C.E. Inscribed with many different curses and incantations, the bowls were used to exorcise liliths, demons, and evil spirits from the house or individuals named on the bowls. Of the evil female figures on the bowls, the most prominent is the lilith, often depicted with long, unruly hair and wings, either as a single hated figure, or as a member of a group of liliths and other evil spirits. A drawing of a bound lilith or other demon often appears in the center of the bowl. The bowl texts accuse the liliths of haunting people at night or in visions of the day; of appearing to men in the likeness of women and to women in the likeness of men, and sometimes in other forms; of lying with them or appearing in the bedroom; and of killing children.

According to the bowls, one prominent

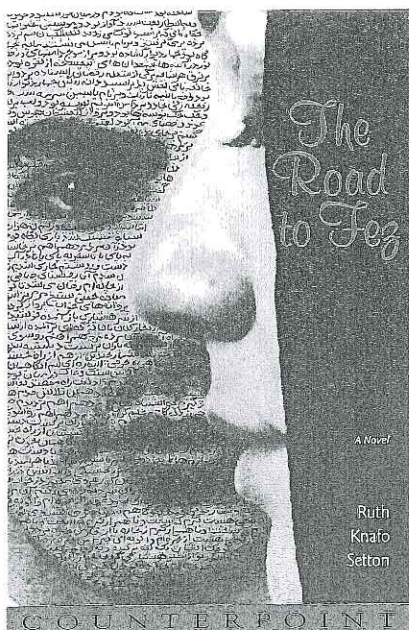
characteristic of the liliths is that they attack people in the sexual and reproductive realm of life. It is no wonder, Lesses said, that some writers of the bowl-incantations employed the language of the Jewish divorce document, the *get*, to rid themselves of the liliths. She pointed out that there are some differences, however, between the rabbinic divorce document (*get*) and the formulas that the bowl texts use. According to rabbinic law, a man gives a *get* to his wife. A woman cannot give a *get* to a man. The formulas in the incantation texts effect a divorce between many demons, both male and female, and both men and women are responsible for sending a *get*.

While the bowl incantations phrase the divorce formulas in legal language, they do not fit the rabbinic specifications for a human divorce document. Lesses believes the writers did not feel bound by the legal constraints because this was a metaphori-

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# Novel *The Road to Fez* Echoes Life of Author Ruth Knafo Setton



Dr. Ruth Knafo Setton, recently appointed as the Berman Center Writer-in-Residence, discussed and read from her newly published novel, *The Road to Fez*, at a program sponsored jointly by the Berman Center and the Dept. of English. (See related article, p. 1.) *The Road to Fez*, which has consistently received fine reviews, provides a perspective on Jewish life in Morocco that has, until now, been little known.

In Setton's words, it was a story she felt almost compelled to write—the story of an exile living in two worlds, which echoes aspects of her own life. Her earliest memories are the roses on her grandfather's roof terrace in Morocco. Her mother's tales of growing up in a small town on the North African coast were her bedtime stories. "I lived in a Morocco of memory, image, dream and longing—the land all exiles and immigrants inhabit—also writers. I am definitely American, raised and educated here, but my nights—where inspiration takes root—my nights are Morocco."

Setton's novel tells of 18-year-old Brit Lek's return to Morocco, her birthplace. Fulfilling her mother's dying wish, she makes a pilgrimage to Fez to the grave of Suleika, a 19th-century Jewish martyr revered by both Arabs and Jews. But Brit gets sidetracked when she falls in love with her Uncle Gaby, her mother's restless younger brother. Together they take the road to Fez, a journey in which their forbidden love unfolds in surprising discoveries. Their story is interwoven with that of

Suleika, the 17-year-old Jewish woman who was killed because she refused to renounce her faith.

Setton said that the first time she saw Suleika's name was in a footnote in a book about Moroccan Jews. "Her name glowed and seemed to rise from the page: illuminated, as in a medieval manuscript." She started searching for information about her and found more than three hundred versions of Suleika's story in the form of ballads, plays, legends, and even newspaper accounts, often contradicting each other. At first Setton's goal was to find the truth about the young martyr, but when she stood at Suleika's tomb in Fez, she had a sort of vision in which she understood that factual accuracy was not the issue. "I had to enter her story myself, the way I hope the reader will."

*I'm about six in the last photo taken of me before my parents and I leave Morocco for the United States. Curly brown hair pulled back in a ponytail. Tiny white dress, sturdy bare legs. Dark eyes that look questioningly at the photographer, or at the street ahead of me. A small wanderer through life, I clutch a black purse, and pause, only for an instant, on my journey. I am resolute, firmly rooted, feet in black patent leather shoes gripping the tiled outdoor corridor. My lips are dark, as if I've just eaten a plum, and traces of the juice have stained my lips. Unsmiling, confident that in a moment I will continue on my path to the future, I can afford to let the photographer freeze me. What he doesn't know, what I don't yet know, is that in another moment, my patent leather shoes will be lifted from the tiles, will dangle in the air, as I hover between two worlds—the New and the Old, belonging to neither, clinging to both.*

—Brit Lek's journal, March 27, 1969

From *The Road to Fez*, by Ruth Knafo Setton

Suleika's life was the catalyst that set the whole novel in motion. Fragments of Suleika's brief, tragic life provide a backdrop for the book—pieces of a puzzle that do not quite fit together. "What would make a young woman choose death over life? Suleika was as low a creature as you could be in Morocco—female and Jewish—but she followed her truth as far as she could," Setton said.

Suleika's choice led Setton to wonder about those who love without limits—

whether it is a god or another person—those who break through barriers of religion, gender, and taboos to come out the other side. "As I wrote about Brit and Gaby and Suleika, I felt I had to share their courage and visions. Once I met Suleika—and then Gaby, and shortly after, Brit—I had no choice: I was caught, forced to follow them wherever they went, no limits."

Praised in the *Forward* as "a fine novel of love and self-discovery," *The Road to Fez*, the reviewer went on to say, "makes the Moroccan Jewish community visible through a literary portrait of the most memorable 18-year-old in recent American fiction."

*The Road to Fez*, Setton's first novel, was published early in 2001 by Counterpoint Press. During the past year, Setton has toured extensively, giving readings and discussing the novel at universities, bookstores, and Jewish community centers, as well as at Jewish book fairs in Philadelphia, Houston, and San Diego. While continuing to teach and organize programs in Jewish literature at Lehigh, Setton is also at work on her second novel, the story of Jewish immigrants in America, tentatively titled *If I Forget You*. (For a complete list of Setton's recent publications, see p. 6).

## Writer-in-Residence Program

Continued from page 1

Agosin began her Lehigh presentation by discussing Jewish literature in the Americas, including her own work as a Chilean Jewish writer, and the ways in which Jewish writers have forged their own literary traditions and identity. She read excerpts from her autobiographical book, *The Alphabet in My Hands: The Writing Life*, and her new book of poetry, *The Angel of Memory*, which explores the injustice, racism, and cruelty of the Holocaust and its aftermath.

Despite the anti-Semitism that has taken place in South America, the presence of Jewish culture has created an intellectual, artistic, and alternative space within the Latin American landscape, Agosin said. The Jews' search for identity and belonging is also a motif for the general human condition of the twentieth century—a century defined by displacements and migrations. She herself has been in exile from



Chile, where she grew up, since Pinochet rose to power as a dictator.

Owing to her untiring efforts to promote the writing of Latin American women and to document the struggles and determination of Argentinean and Chilean women, Agosin has emerged as one of the leading voices for Latin American feminism in the United States. She received the Jeanneta Rankin Award for Achievement in Human Rights, the United Nations Leadership Award on Human Rights, the Letra D'Oro Prize, and the Latina Literature Prize.

While Agosin lives in the United States and writes in Spanish, **Karen Alkalay-Gut**, also brought to Lehigh through the writer-in-residence program, lives in Israel and writes in English. During her reading, Alkalay-Gut explained that when she moved to Israel in 1972 and found herself in a non-English-speaking environment, she began holding dialogues with herself through poetry. "Poems became my means of expression, my old friends from home, and my way of communicating with my environment." These private conversations became public when Israeli poets began translating her work into Hebrew and it was published in Israeli periodicals and, later, in journals in the U.S. and England. Setton describes Alkalay-Gut's poetry as "sharp, funny, poignant, and deceptively simple—a 'love soup,' composed of a woman's desire, a Jew's memory, an Israeli's pain, a mother's loss—stirred in a huge pot, then served hot."

Acknowledging that the escalation of violence in Israel has affected what she writes, Alkalay-Gut said she has found herself "stuck writing snapshots of the war." She read several of her poems about the Middle East conflict, poems that also focus on the issues of responsibility, blame, and guilt. Her poem "Live War," for instance, examines the role television has played in the conflict.

Raised and educated in America, Alkalay-Gut teaches English at Tel Aviv University and chairs the Israel Association of Writers in English. She is the author of more than a dozen collections of poetry including *Recipes: Love Soup and Other Poems*, *Between Bombardments*, *The Love of Clothes and Nakedness*, and *In My Skin*. She has received the Arie Dulchin Prize for Literature, the BBC World Service Poetry Award, and the Rachel Prize.

The Philip and Muriel Berman Center for Jewish Studies recognizes with gratitude the individuals listed here. Through annual and endowments gifts, these generous contributors have greatly enhanced the academic, cultural, and programmatic offerings of the Berman Center and Lehigh University.

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**Daniel Paley Ellison**, also driven to write because of the violence in the world, was invited to Lehigh to present a slide show and poetry reading titled "Seamless Monument: Poetry and Photographs from Hiroshima and Auschwitz." Although his work covers a variety of themes, his latest project, "The Seamless Monument," shows the aesthetic complexity of memorialization and reflects the intimacy between human beings and suffering. Integrating poetry and photographs that emerged from his extended visits to the European death camps and Hiroshima, the project bears witness to those cultures who have endured immense suffering and devastation caused by other human beings. "The Seamless Monument," Ellison explained, "is any place, or any part of ourselves that is denied, suppressed, killed, neglected, eaten away by radiation. . . . I

realize it is not about a monument that has been built, but it is what remains after death. The present."

Ellison, who is Poet-in-Residence at the New York City Public Schools, has been featured on National Public Radio and Good Morning America. His work has appeared in *The New Voice*, *The Sarah Lawrence Review*, *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review*, *Abiku Quarterly*, and in the book *Majic Bus*.

Setton looks forward to bringing more inspiring, challenging programs of this nature to the Lehigh community. As the Berman Center's writer-in-residence, she believes it is her responsibility to create a sense of excitement about the power of literature and highlight the need for communication and connection among diverse communities in the fragmented world in which we live.



## BCJS Faculty 2001–2002

- Laurence J. Silberstein, Philip and Muriel Berman Professor of Jewish Studies, Dept. of Religion Studies, Lehigh University, *Jewish Responses to the Holocaust, Modes of Jewish Identity in the Modern World, Sex and Gender in Judaism: The Feminist Critique, Judaism in Israel and the United States, The Spiritual Quest in Contemporary Jewish Life*

- Robert L. Cohn, Philip and Muriel Berman Professor of Jewish Studies, Dept. of Religion, Lafayette College, *Hebrew Bible, Biblical Narrative, Jewish Responses to Catastrophe*

- Chava Weissler, Philip and Muriel Berman Professor of Jewish Civilization, Dept. of Religion Studies, Lehigh University, *Jewish Folklore, Hasidic Tales, Modern Judaism, Mystical Tradition in Judaism, Women in Jewish History, Gendered Jewish Lives*

- Ruth Knafo Setton, Writer-in-Residence, Berman Center for Jewish Studies and Dept. of English, Lehigh University, *Jewish Literature*

### Affiliated Faculty Lehigh University

- David Amidon, Jr., Urban Studies Program, *American Jews: Politics and Culture*

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- Ilana Levy, Dept. of Foreign Languages and Literatures, *Hebrew Language*

- Howard Marblestone, Dept. of Foreign Languages and Literatures, *Hebrew Language*

- Ilan Peleg, Dept. of Government and Law, *Middle East Politics*

- Robert Weiner, Dept. of History, *Modern Jewish History*

## Faculty Notes

Howard Marblestone's essay "The Great Archaeological Debate" was published in the *Bulletin of the Israel Studies Association*, and his translation of "Archaeology, the Bible, and Israeli Society" (Hebrew) by Zeev Herzog appeared in the British journal *Prometheus*. Marblestone also reviewed the autobiography of Professor Cyrus H. Gordon, *A Scholar's Odyssey* (Society of Biblical Literature, Biblical Scholarship in North American, Vol. 20, 2000), in the November and December 2000 issues of the Hebrew periodical *HaDoar*.

Harriet Parmet, professor emerita in Lehigh's Dept. of Modern Languages and Literature, recently published *The Terror of Our Days: Four American Poets Respond to the Holocaust* with Lehigh University Press. Parmet taught courses in Hebrew language and literature and Israeli culture at Lehigh for twenty years.

Bunnie Piltch was named teacher of the week earlier this year by Lehigh's Alpha Chi Omega Sorority because she is "an outstanding faculty member [whose] enthusiasm has not gone unnoticed." Her article "Language Interaction and Codeswitching in the English as a Second Language (ESL) Classroom" was published in a special edition of Temple University's *Working Papers*.

Piltch presented a paper, "Acknowledging Students' Heritage and Foreign Language Study in the University Setting: A Heritage Awareness Program," at the annual Temple Educational Research Association conference at Temple University. At the annual Conference on Alternatives in Jewish Education at Colorado State University, she discussed "*Shalom Aleikhem: A Model for the Integration of Reading Techniques*." She also served as a delegate to the World Jewish Educators' Mission to Israel in July.

Ruth Knafo Setton published poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, and her first novel *The Road to Fez* (see p. 4) in 2001: Her poetry appeared in *In Posse Review*, *Moon Review*, *Midday Moon*, and *Two Rivers Review*. "The Shiver Test" (fiction) was published in *Arts and Letters*; "Down These Mean Streets" (fiction) was published in *Nothing Makes You Free: Writing from the Second Generation On*, edited by Melvin Jules Bukiet; and "The Cat Garden" (fiction)

appeared in *With Signs and Wonders: An International Anthology of Jewish Fabulist Fiction*. "The Memory House" (creative nonfiction) was published in *Life Briefs: Essays by Prominent Jewish Women*, edited by Rebecca Goldstein, and "Searching for God in the Sierra" (creative nonfiction) was published in *Lost on the Map of the World: Essays and Memoirs on Contemporary Jewish American Women's Quest for Home*.

Setton was the featured poet on jbooks.com in April. She gave readings of *The Road to Fez* at bookstores, synagogues, and universities. Her book tour will take her to San Diego, Houston, and Miami. Interviews and reviews of *The Road to Fez* have appeared in the *Washington Post*, *Hartford Courant*, *Lilith*, *The Jewish Quarterly*, *Publishers Weekly*, *HaAretz*, and elsewhere.

Laurence J. Silberstein served as the Richard and Susan Master Visiting Professor in Fall 2000 at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, where he taught a course on Jewish identities in the modern world. He edited and wrote the introduction to *Mapping Jewish Identities*. He is currently coediting with Shelley Hornstein and Laura Levitt a volume, *Transforming Memory: Representation, Art, and the Holocaust*, based on the Berman Center's 2000 conference.

Silberstein's article "Theory as Practice: Postzionism and the Critique of Power" appeared in the *Israel Studies Bulletin*. He organized and chaired a panel on "Postzionism and the Critique of Power" at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Israel Studies and lectured on his recent book, *The Postzionism Debates*, at the University of Arizona and University of Miami. In November, he presented a paper, "Beyond the Zionist State: Israeli Identity in the 21st Century," at a conference on Language, Literature, and Peace in the Middle East.

Chava Weissler recently published two articles: "Measuring Graves and Laying Wicks" in *Judaism in Practice*, edited by Lawrence Fine, and "For Whom Do I Toil?" in the *Jewish Book Annual* for 1999. She presented several invited lectures during the past year. At an international conference organized by the Goldstein-Goren International Center for Jewish Thought at Ben-Gurion University, she discussed "The Begin-



ning and the End: Women's Tehines from Candle-Lighting to Got fun Avrohom." At Bucknell University, she presented a lecture on her book *Voices of the Matriarchs: The Prayers of Early Modern Jewish Women*.

Weissler also spoke at the Symposium on Writing Jewish Lives in Fiction, Poetry, Biography, and Essay sponsored by the National Foundation for Jewish Culture in cooperation with the Koret Foundation. She participated in a panel on "The Shift Towards Practice in the Study of Judaism" at the Association for Jewish Studies Annual Meeting in Boston.

**Benjamin Wright III** gave invited papers at conferences in Jerusalem. At the Sixth International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls, he presented "The Categories of Rich and Poor in the Qumran Sapiential Literature." At a conference on Hellenism and Judaism at the Institute for Advanced Studies at Hebrew University of Jerusalem, he discussed "Access to the Source: Cicero, Ben Sira, the Septuagint and their Audiences." He also discussed his research on the relationship between 1 Enoch and Ben Sira at the First International Enoch Seminar in Florence, Italy.

Wright's articles have appeared in two recent books. "Ebed/Doulos: Terms and Social Status in the Meeting of Hebrew-Biblical and Hellenistic-Roman Culture" was included in *Slavery in Text and Interpretation*, edited by Richard Horsley, Allen Callahan, and Abraham Smith. "Heaven—A Place of Revelation and Discovery" was published in *Who Killed Goliath? Reading the Bible with Heart and Mind*, edited by Deborah Spink and Robert Shedinger.

## Rebecca Lesses

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cal extension of the idea of divorce to cover the realm of relationships between human beings and demons or liliths. The change in setting from the rabbinic house of study, where the rabbis determined the laws of divorce, to the household, where both men and women employed incantation bowls to protect themselves, allowed the bowl writers to change the divorce formula to permit women to use it in support of the social system of the household.

# Jewish Studies Courses at Lehigh

## Literature

American-Jewish Literature (Setton)  
Creative Writing: Perspective on Ethnic Identities (Setton)  
Jewish Women Writers (Setton)  
Stories: (Re)Imagining the Jewish Past (Krummel)

## Philosophy

Jewish Philosophy (Weiss)  
Medieval Philosophy (Weiss)  
Two Faces of Maimonides (Weiss)

## Language

Elementary Modern Hebrew I (Piltch)  
Elementary Modern Hebrew II (Piltch)  
Intermediate Modern Hebrew I (Piltch)  
Intermediate Modern Hebrew II (Piltch)

## International Relations

Middle East in World Affairs to 1945 (Smolansky)  
Middle East in World Affairs since 1945 (Smolansky)

## Religion Studies

American Judaism (Silberstein)  
Archaeology and the Bible in the Land of Israel  
(Lehigh in Israel course) (Wright)  
Beginnings of Judaism and Jewish Origins: Jewish Diversity in the  
Greco-Roman World (Wright)  
Contemporary Theology (Staff)  
Gendered Jewish Lives (Weissler)  
Hasidic Tales (Weissler)  
Holocaust: History and Meaning (Staff)  
Israel: Religion, Culture, National Identity (Silberstein)  
Israel, Zionism, and the Renewal of Judaism (Silberstein)  
Jewish Folklore (Weissler)  
Jewish Responses to the Holocaust (Silberstein)  
Jewish Scriptures/Old Testament (Wright)  
Jewish Tradition (Weissler)  
Judaism in the Modern World (Silberstein)  
Judaism in Israel and the United States (Silberstein)  
Mystical Tradition: Judaism (Weissler)  
Sex and Gender in Judaism: The Feminist Critique (Silberstein)  
Sources for the Life of Jesus: The Jewish and Christian Context (Wright)  
Spiritual Quest in Contemporary Jewish Life (Silberstein)  
Women in Jewish History (Weissler)

## Urban Studies

American Jews: Politics and Culture (Amidon)

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### Israeli Academician

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to put its nuclear weapons program on the table for discussion that would not give other countries an incentive to go nuclear.

Emphasizing that he was not calling for transparency, Cohen suggested two steps that Israel could take now to be more democratic on the issue of nuclear weapons. First, Israel should establish a national atomic energy act, as the United States did in 1946, which would not require acknowledging the existence of nuclear weapons. Second, Israel should eliminate censorship. By current Israeli law, journalists, researchers, and scholars must submit their written material with relevance to national security to a censor, who has the power to edit or ban any proposed publication. Though Israel is by no means in a state of peace, Cohen believes that censorship should be restricted to two areas: military operations and intelligence. He has experienced first-hand the effects of Israel's pervasive concern with secrecy. Although his research for *Israel and the*

*Bomb* was gathered from unclassified documents and interviews, the Israeli security establishment attempted to prevent its publication.

Cohen believes that even a peace agreement with all Arab states would not necessitate changing Israel's basic nuclear policies. The lessons of the past, he suggested, have given Israel the right to keep some form of nuclear deterrence as a guarantee against another Holocaust. He suggested that even in a nuclear weapon-free zone, Israel could retain its ability to produce nuclear weapons without actually having any.

Cohen has written extensively on issues related to nuclear proliferation in the Middle East and nuclear deterrence and morality. He is Senior Research Fellow at the National Security Archive. Formerly, he was co-director of the Project on Nuclear Arms Control in the Middle East at the Security Studies Program at MIT and Senior Fellow at the United States Institute of Peace. From 1983 to 1992 he was a member of the Philosophy Dept. at Tel Aviv University.

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