



# LIBRARY STAFF NEWS

ISSUE 9

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## NEW POLLACK HEAD LIBRARIAN

Beginning on January 22, 2019, Sandy Moore became the Pollack Head Librarian. Sandy is a Rutgers alumna (philosophy, religious studies), and in addition to a library science degree, holds a master's degree in religious studies from the University of Kansas.

For the past four years Sandy has been Library Director and Academic Support Division Chair at Allen Community College in Iola, Kansas. She was directly responsible for the entire operation of the Allen College Library, where she served on Academic Affairs, Curriculum, Accreditation, and Strategic Planning Committees and chaired the Academic Support Division. The Allen College Library includes the main library on the Iola Campus, a satellite location, and a comprehensive collection of electronic resources for a large population of online learners. As Library Director, Sandy has supervised the following areas: acquisitions, electronic resources, library technologies, reference services, library instruction, access services, interlibrary loan, library programming, assessment, and the academic support division.

Welcome, Sandy, to Pollack Library.



Sandy Moore. Photo by J.B. Holderness

## MEMORIAL FOR HAYA GORDIN, A"H [MAY SHE REST IN PEACE]

By Marlene Schiffman

The *Sheloshim* (marking 30 days since her passing) for Haya Gordin, of blessed memory, took place on January 30 in the Rubin Shul. Haya was a long-time member of the staff of Gottesman Library. She grew up in the pre-State period of Israeli history and served as a soldier and follower of the Revisionist Zionists\* before she married and came to New York.

Although many people spoke about Haya and her influence on their lives--rabbis, friends, and relatives--Zvi Erenyi spoke on behalf of Gottesman Library. He read several recollections by colleagues who worked with Haya over the years.

Rabbi Carmy wrote: *For many years Haya Gordin was inseparable from the life of Gottesman Library. It was her pleasure and vocation to serve the [rabbis], faculty and students of Yeshiva. And many of us reciprocated her appreciation and her indomitable enthusiasm.*

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*Haya as a young woman in Israel*

*I witnessed her dedication when I served as a work-study employee of the library and later as a teacher. One of the frustrations of using a library is when books are mis-shelved. I don't think anyone surpassed Haya's ability to detect where such a missing book was likely to be found. And she brought the same energy to the other responsibilities and chores of the library.*

*These random remarks fail to communicate a sense of Haya's presence in the library and the warmth of her personal attachment to the people she connected with. For those who were there, they may provide a reminder of memorable friendship; to those who were not, a feeling of what they missed. May her memory be a blessing.*

From the remarks of Sarah Levy, former Periodicals Librarian at Gottesman Library and later Head Librarian:

*Haya's impact on my life was immeasurable. I met Haya over 40 years ago when I was first hired. She loved the Yeshiva, the students. Washington Heights, Torah, Judaism and [the Land of Israel] all with equal fervor. On a personal level, Haya was nurturing, loving and infuriating. I often wanted to hug her and tear my hair out at the same time. But whatever Haya said or did, it came from a place of truth. She was never duplicitous or conniving. She said what she meant, and she meant what she said.*

*To those who cared for her, visited her, and embraced her with their love over these past few years, yasher koach [Bravo! Nice work!]. Haya was a*

*righteous woman, a unique bastion of integrity and belief. I know she will be sorely missed by those whose lives she touched, and I count myself among the fortunate to have known this special woman.*

Zalman Alpert, former Judaica Reference Librarian, recalled: *In my years of work with her, I learnt much about Haya, especially where she came from. Her family came from Lunschitz, the home of the Kli Yakar [Ephraim Solomon ben Aaron, (1550-1619), famous Bible commentator] and more recently of Rav Yedidya Frankel [Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv]. Her father, Mr Knopf, [had a rabbinical degree] from Poland and [was] a dedicated follower of Zev Jabotinsky [leader of the Revisionist Zionists]. Haya too was a follower of Jabotinsky and [Menachem] Begin (1913-1992) [a supporter of Jabotinsky's and later Prime Minister of Israel]. She was active in the Revisionist underground before 1948. She loved Judaism and true Jewish values as exemplified by YU.*

*Haya knew much about Hebrew literature, language and Jewish bibliography. She developed close professional relationships with YU faculty, and Rav [Joseph] Soloveitchik [d. 1993, premier Rabbi and teacher at YU]. Haya was a strong personality, with her own ideas about life, Israel, Judaism and books. I will miss her.*

*We were all one family in the Gottesman Library. We shared [happy events] and the opposite. When I was ill years ago, she, as well as others, were very supportive. I just wish that she could have realized her dream of returning to Israel, the country she helped create. Alas it did not happen, but I am sure in the time of [the Messiah], she will be among the first to be back in Israel, and the first to give King [Messiah] advice in running the new Israel.*

*My condolences to her family. May her memory be for a blessing.*

Thanks to those who shared their thoughts at the memorial and to Zvi who read them and kindly sent them to the Newsletter so that we could all benefit from knowing more about Haya and her major impact in Gottesman Library.

**\*Note:** Revisionist Zionism, founded in 1923 by Ze'ev Jabotinsky (1880-1940), demanded that the mainstream Zionist movement recognize as its stated objective the establishment of a Jewish state on both banks of the Jordan River. Jabotinsky's main goal was to establish a modern Jewish state with the help of the British Empire.

## SECURITY: ACTIVE SHOOTER TRAINING AND WORKPLACE SAFETY ASSESSMENTS

By Rebecca Malamud & Marlene Schiffman

In light of the Tree of Life Congregation massacre that occurred in Pittsburgh on October 27, 2018, many members of the staff felt that the security of the Library needed to be addressed in further detail. On November 14 at 4:45 pm, Mr. Paul Murtha, Head of YU Security and Mr. Kelvin Valentin of the Security Department presented an Active Shooter Training session. This meeting, spearheaded by Shulamis, was meant to alert the Security Department to the Library's unique design. Mr. Murtha and his team surveyed Library floors, locks, and egresses in order to develop Library-specific safety protocols and guidelines.

At the meeting, Mr. Murtha spoke about the Library building, instructed us on what to do in case of an active shooter situation, gave us pointers and answered questions. The crowd was very enthusiastic and asked many questions. Because of the crowd's enthusiasm, the meeting ran longer than expected.

The Security team explained that there are three actions that can be taken, depending on how much time is available. 1) Try to escape the scene. 2) Lower the volume on the cellphones and wait for instructions from YU Security. If there are no intruders in the Library, get as many students as possible into the offices. 3) Barricade yourself in the office; lock the door; do not let anyone in. 4) If you must confront the perpetrator, try to distract him by throwing things at him or overpowering him.

Thanks to Paul and Shulamis for arranging this session.

## SECOND MINI-SYMPOSIUM

By Marlene Schiffman

A very informative day of sessions at the Wilf Campus, Pollack Library, took place on January 16. The Library sponsored our second mini-symposium entitled: "Innovative Trends in Academic Librarianship." The Hedi Steinberg Library was closed for the day, and the mini-symposium had nearly 100% attendance of all library staff.

Paul introduced the first panel who discussed campus OER initiatives. Open Educational Resources make textbooks and coursework available to students without their having to buy expensive tomes. The speakers were three librarians from colleges in the New York area, Jean Amaral, Cailean Cooney, and Megan Wacha. They

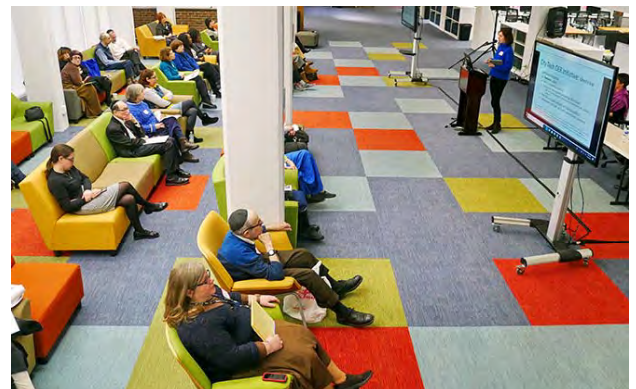
explained how their libraries implemented OER and the benefits they see from having adopted it.

The second presentation was given by Eamon Tewell who demonstrated how he uses TV clips in information literacy instruction. Besides being entertaining, these clips present information in a format that students later remember.

After a lunch, compliments of the YU Libraries, we were treated to a hands-on "Spaghetti and Marshmallow Workshop" with Samantha Mairson. Her challenge to us gave us an opportunity to do some teamwork in design thinking. The contest demanded of each team to build the highest tower of raw spaghetti with the marshmallow at the top.

Then Robert Farrell explained the value of deep listening in the library. He addressed such concepts as listening to other people in context, the value of silence, and the ethics of listening. As we concentrate on what the other is saying, we must seek to suppress the desire to speak or to think our own thoughts, thereby paying no attention to what the other has to say.

All who were present admitted that the day flew by in thought-provoking activities (and great refreshments). Thanks to this year's committee: Paul, Deena, and Marlene.



*Attentive listening in the library. Photo by J. B. Holderness*

## SHORTS

Once again, staff will help prepare the Catalog of University Authors for distribution at the event in May.

Students have requested the library be open on Fridays and Saturdays for extended hours. It was recommended to open the Heights Lounge.





*Rachel with her entry from the Spaghetti and Marshmallow Workshop. Photo by J.B. Holderness*

Hao has made it possible for research consultations with the public service librarians to be linked to the Outlook calendar so that students can make appointments directly.

Hao has created the address [interlibraryloan@yu.edu](mailto:interlibraryloan@yu.edu) for direct access to interlibrary loan service.

Alumni access renewal frequency to YULIS will be set to five years.

Hedi Steinberg Library will undergo capital improvements this summer. They are planning a renovation in the North Wing Library and the second floor. Librarians have begun to prepare for their renovation by going through the collection to see what can be weeded and/or relocated. Space will be repurposed into a dedicated/flexible instruction lab, additional group study spaces, and a consolidated, welcoming service point

Sandy will create a task force to investigate open educational resources (OER).

Evacuation signs to be placed at the stairways and elevators are in progress for the Mendel Gottesman Building. Graphic designers will finalize the designs that Rebecca & other staff members drew up, print them in Production, and install them in the designated frames near the elevators.

Staff are encouraged to send portraits to Hao for the staff directory on the website.

For those who missed the last Lunchtime Learning session on 3D Printing with David Kohanchi, it is now available for staff on YouTube via an [internal link](#).

Deena has alerted us to the legal understanding of copyrights highlighted in Fair Use Week. Read her article on the Library Blog at:

<https://blogs.yu.edu/library/2019/02/22/fair-use-week-2019/>

Librarians are busy making preparations to attend the 54<sup>th</sup> Annual Association of Jewish Libraries Conference, June 17-19 in Woodland Hills, California. Besides making travel arrangements, some are also preparing presentations.

## LIBRARY INSTRUCTION IN BROOKLYN

By Wendy Kosakoff

The Wurzweiler School of Social Work and the Sara Schenirer Teachers Seminary in Borough Park, Brooklyn recently began a partnership to offer master's degrees in social work to women from the Orthodox Jewish community. Born from both institutions' desire to serve this community's mental health and social welfare needs, this collaboration reflects the social work school's philosophy that every cultural group should be able to service these needs within their own community.

The program is offered in a "Live Online" format via the ZOOM video conferencing platform. It differs from a traditional online course of study in that the students "meet" live at the same time every week, via webcam in an interactive setting.

The cohort of 28 students met at the Schenirer Seminary in Brooklyn for a two-day orientation in early February. This may be the only time that these online students will all be together in one place. Students not from Borough Park traveled from Monsey, Far Rockaway, Woodmere, Lakewood, Philadelphia, and as far away as Toronto, Montreal, Detroit, and Israel. I joined them to provide library instruction. When I arrived, they were listening to a panel of former Wurzweiler students currently working in the private and public sectors.

Allotted 45 minutes to introduce our library resources, I gave the students an overview of our website and taught them how to search for information they will need for their research. I gave them my contact information, and I have already heard from many of them. Some of the students had not used an online library before and had so many questions that our session ran overtime. I expect that next time I will be given much more time!

A recent article from The Commentator describes the program:

<https://yucommentator.org/2018/12/wurzweiler-partnership-sara-schenirer-institute-begin-new-year/>



*Sara Schenirer Teachers Academy in Borough Park, Brooklyn.*

*Photo by Wendy Kosakoff*

## SOVIET JEWRY ACTIVISM ARCHIVAL COLLECTION

By Marlene Schiffman

Yeshiva University Archives has just mounted video footage of the Soviet Jewry Oral History Project on YouTube. "Big Brother is Watching Them. Our Brothers are Waiting for Us," was the message of the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry (SSSJ) in 1984. Today you are welcome to watch and listen to Soviet Jewry activists reminisce about their efforts to breach the Iron Curtain by [clicking here](#).

Yeshiva University Archives holds the videos and posters of the SSSJ in which many of YU's students and faculty were active. The organization, founded in 1964 by Jacob Birnbaum of Washington Heights, was a pioneer in the movement to oppose the

persecution of Jews in the Soviet Union. These activists promoted the establishment of religious services in the Soviet Union, the right of immigration, and freedom for many political prisoners held for expressing their Jewish identities. The interviews were conducted by Glenn Richter, former National Coordinator of the SSSJ.

This is a valuable collection not only for the spotlight it throws on the Soviet Jewry movement, but also for pointing out Yeshiva's pivotal role in it. You are invited to read more about the project at:

<https://blogs.yu.edu/library/2019/01/23/behind-the-curtain-of-soviet-jewry-activism/>



*Sample of the Soviet Jewry Poster Collection*

## STRATEGIC PLANNING WORK GROUPS

A meeting of the Strategic Planning Committee was held on March 4th. Here is a summary of the reports from the Work Groups.

**MGL WORK GROUP**

Moshe Schapiro, Chair

Zvi and Moshe continue to work in the basement. Some boxes of newspapers have been brought up to Level 6. Others have been shelved in the basement. The entire range of boxes on 6 will need to be shifted in order to make room for more boxes.

Many more boxes remain and need to be sorted through and put in chronological order and will then be shelved. The recent hire of several student workers will hopefully make the work go more quickly.

**DIGITIZATION WORK GROUP**

Deena Schwimmer, Chair

We are working with the National Library of Israel on an agreement for them to digitize our manuscripts and add them to Ktiv, their repository of Hebrew manuscripts from throughout the world. We continue our review of issues of the *Commentator* and *Observer* student newspapers so that they would be ready for digitization should funding become available; however right now there is nothing definite. The same is true for the Ladino book collection and *La Vara* periodical, for which we've also submitted several funding proposals.

We have contracted with Common Medial for an Islandora-based system to replace our current Digital Library. The project should begin shortly and be implemented by the end of the fiscal year. Islandora will provide more robust functionality and flexibility than we currently have. Finally, we continue to transfer our audio/video collections on CDs and DVDs to digital formats to insure that they are better preserved. This is being done in-house over time using free software.

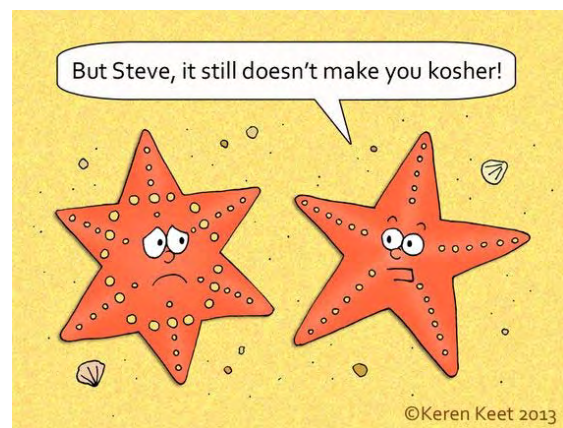
**TECHNOLOGICAL SERVICES WORK GROUP**

J.B. Holderness, Chair

The Library Digital Services department has acquired two 50-inch flat-panel screens, that will soon be installed in group study rooms 309 (3<sup>rd</sup> floor) and 210 (2<sup>nd</sup> floor). We are currently testing a wireless receiver that will allow anyone with a Mac or PC laptop to remotely display their screen without the need for cables or wall jacks. In addition, we are retrofitting the existing flat-panel display in the downstairs group study room at Hedi Steinberg Library to also have this wireless display capability. We have also added a new flat-panel display monitor to the 8-person conference room

attached to the Library Director's office (room 401) on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor.

A new bar code scanner has been added to the circulation desk PC in Pollack Library. It employs a 2D-type of laser bar code scanner and has the ability to read many varieties of modern bar codes, including those displayed on a smartphone screen. This allows us to look up students who use the YU OneCard app or a photo of their ID card on their phone. We will evaluate the usage of this new scanner to see if we should purchase additional units.

**INSTRUCTION/PUBLIC SERVICES**

Wendy Kosakoff, Chair

**Instruction:** So far this semester our librarians have taught a total of 13 classes. This includes 5 orientation sessions and 8 information literacy classes. The HSL librarians updated their slide presentation for their two Sunday orientations; POL conducted a brief "Top 10 Things You Can Do at the Library" session. There are still a few more classes scheduled before the end of the semester. Wendy traveled to Borough Park, Brooklyn to give a library presentation as part of an orientation for a newly created social work program in conjunction with the Sara Schenirer School. ([See article in this Newsletter](#))

**Personal Librarians:** HSL librarians have created a shareable spreadsheet to keep track of personal librarian activity. Some of our librarians have met with students this semester.

**YU Student Research Award: Student Research Award:** The 2019 YU Student Library



Research Award is designed to recognize outstanding library research conducted by an undergraduate student at Yeshiva University in support of a paper assignment. The winner of the Award will be presented with a check for \$250 and a framed certificate. This award is sponsored by the Yeshiva University Libraries. The library website is once again adorned with a light blue banner linked to information about the award. Deadline for student submissions is April 11, 2019. A reminder will be sent to students through an email blast towards the end of the month. Our committee of readers includes Zvi, Steve, Paul, Stephanie, Wendy, Rina, Sandy, and Deena.

**Instructional Videos:** Rina and Wendy created instructional videos for the new online social work programs that started in January.

**Meeting:** Paul, Sandy, and Wendy met with Wendy Williams, the new Director of the Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning, and Daphne Kohavy, Senior Instructional Technologist, to discuss ways in which we can collaborate. Part of the discussion included ways to offer online instruction through tutorials embedded in Canvas.

**Social Media:** Our social media platforms are updated often.

Twitter: @yulibraries

Facebook: Yeshiva University Libraries

Instagram: YULibraries

YouTube: Yeshiva University Libraries

*Follow us! And send Wendy photos!*

### STAFF DEVELOPMENT WORK GROUP

Marlene Schiffman, Chair

The major thrust of our work this semester was the planning of the mini-symposium, held January 16. (See the article above, in this issue.) It featured a panel on Open Educational Resources, a workshop on cooperative projects, a demonstration of the use of TV clips in library literacy, and a session on deep listening. Thanks to Paul whose knowledge of available speakers allowed us to hear from some of the brightest young librarians now working in academic settings in the New York area.

Next round of Lunchtime Learning sessions are now in the works. Any ideas you have will be considered.

Perhaps you would like to give one. Others are interested in what you do!

### OUTREACH WORK GROUP

Elinor Grumet, Chair

The Outreach Committee has arranged three Library Talks this year: two have already been held. The first on December 13 with Prof. Ronnie Perelis, discussed his latest book on autobiographies of Jews in the Inquisition. The second was the talk held in conjunction with the SOY Seforim sale on February 24<sup>th</sup> by Rabbi Dr. Ephraim Kanarfogel on the philosophy of Rabbi J.B. Soloveitchik.

The April 9 Book Talk will feature Prof. Matt Miller of the SCW English Department who will be speaking about Walt Whitman at the Beren Campus. This talk is part of the YU Arts Festival and coincides with National Poetry Month.

The Library owns several editions of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* as well as many other rare books written by Whitman. Some of the titles are famous and some are obscure. Many of these books are first editions; a few are signed; some were printed in limited quantities; and at least one is printed on parchment paper. The earliest book in the library's collection was published in 1860. These books are cited in the Whitman catalog from the Library of Congress (1955) compiled by C.E. Feinberg (which is also in Pollack Library).

The series of Library Book Talks are open to the community.

### RABBI DR. KANARFOGEL

### SPEAKS ABOUT THE RAV

By Elinor Grumet

There was a very good feeling in Belfer Hall on February 24, 2019 at 4 P.M. when the YU Libraries and the Revel Graduate School co-sponsored a Library Book Talk by Rabbi Dr. Ephraim Kanarfogel. The room was a lecture hall with stadium seating, and about 75 people were in the audience. The event was held in conjunction with the SOY Seforim Sale, going on in Weissberg Commons on the floor below. A poster at the entrance to Belfer advertised the event; and the SOY workers announced it on the P.A. system twenty minutes and again ten minutes before it was scheduled to begin.



Rabbi Dr. Ephraim Kanarfogel. Photo by Elinor Grumet

Rabbi Kanarfogel's topic was the book he recently edited with Dov Schwartz of Bar-Ilan University on the scholarship of Rav Soloveitchik, *Scholarly Man of Faith*. The book's genesis was a conference held at YU and Bar-Ilan University on the subject. The chapters of the book were among the papers presented. A second volume, in Hebrew, is now being prepared.

Rabbi Kanarfogel spent the first twenty minutes of his talk on the Rav's "proclivities"—the work of Maimonides, especially the *Mishna Torah*, and the work of Nachmanides. Like those forbears, the Rav mastered the entire Talmudic corpus, plus the philosophy and kabbalah that informed those thinkers' respective writings. Having written his Ph.D. on Hermann Cohen, the Rav also drew on contemporary thought. His knowledge was massive, encyclopedic. He remembered everything he ever read, and could expound on a single topic for hours, referring to innumerable sources, traditional and modern.

After the lecture, Rabbi Kanarfogel moved from the podium to a lively Q&A session with Rina Krautwirth of the Hedi Steinberg Library. Rina's questions were pointed, and Rabbi Kanarfogel was interesting and entertaining. It was during this Q&A that Kanarfogel spoke of the Rav as a teacher who could gently guide his students or intimidate them with his learning.

The efforts of many went into making this event a success. Paul was our emcee; he set the tone. He also helped set up and take down the

equipment. J.B. provided the tripod for taping the event and the photos showing us how to use it. Rina provided the camera (her cell phone). Elinor played cinematographer. She and Paul sent out mass emails to YU faculty, staff, and students, and saw to the hanging of flyers advertising the book talk around both campuses. Wendy alerted the social media—several times. And Shuli arranged for some PR in Washington Heights, and brought our event poster over to Belfer from the library that rainy Sunday morning. Sara Twersky of Revel took care of the design of our flyer/poster, and the ad for our talk on the YU flat-screen. She arranged the room and the parking space for our speaker. The CEO and Marketing Officers of the SOY sale—Ari Mandelbaum and Eli Weiss—were extremely helpful, ordering copies of Kanarfogel's book, and setting up a table on the floor of the sale where the books could be autographed. The Department of Marketing and Communication took still photos.

The good feeling in the room was not only because of all the heart that went into the planning, but because our speaker was, as Paul put it, "enthusiastic and very appreciative of the invitation."

You can view the YouTube video of Dr. Kanarfogel's presentation by [clicking here](#).

## INSTITUTIONAL REPOSITORY WORK GROUP

Hao Zeng, Chair

New additions to YAIR include forty-one articles authored by faculty and solicited by Stephanie. They were added to the collections since last December. Previous issues of the Library Staff Newsletter (8 issues so far) were added to YAIR. The book talk sponsored by the Outreach Work Group featuring Prof. Perelis, entitled *Narratives from the Sephardic Atlantic: Blood and Faith*, was also added to the IR. Since the 15<sup>th</sup> of December, 8700 users have visited the site. Soon to appear is the latest book talk of Rabbi Dr. Ephraim Kanarfogel on Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik.



A new feature of YAIR will be a Test Bank Collection. Here YU faculty will post previous exams in order to help students review for finals. This process will also discourage professors from reusing tests from year to year. The tests will be searchable by professor, course title, course number, and year. They will be visible only for on-campus access.

## ENGAGING WITH THE AUTHOR

By J.B. Holderness

In December, Samuel J. Levine, Professor of law and director of the Jewish Law Institute at Touro College, published a book entitled *Was Yosef on the Spectrum?: Understanding Joseph through Torah, Midrash, and Classical Jewish Sources*. The book examines the behavior and relationships of Yosef through the lens of our modern understanding of autism. Our own cataloger Yosef Cohen submitted a review of the book to the author and received an appreciative response. The following are excerpts of the review and reply:

Y. Cohen:

*Yosef is one of the most complicated of all the Torah personalities and this is reflected in the kaleidoscopic range of explanations given for his conduct and, most pertinently, his affect, at different stages of his life. One simple example: why, after the adverse reaction the telling of his first dream elicits from his brothers—their sheaves bowing to his—does Yosef proceed to share the contents of his second, which is even more provocative in its implications? Does he not know that he is making himself extremely unpopular, that, in fact, his brothers have come to hate him for the presumption and the grandiosity of his dreams? Professor Levine addresses this and many other such questions and, while mining the full range of opinions to be found among the classical commentators, has produced what we might call a unitary theory of his own. Yosef was afflicted with a 'condition'; Yosef was, in fact, on the spectrum!*

S. Levine:

*Thank you for your very kind and very thoughtful comments about my book. I would, of course, welcome more of your thoughts, as part of a formal essay or informally. In addition,*

*as I mentioned, I am considering future projects exploring other figures, such as Yaakov, and I will welcome your thoughts on these ideas as well.*

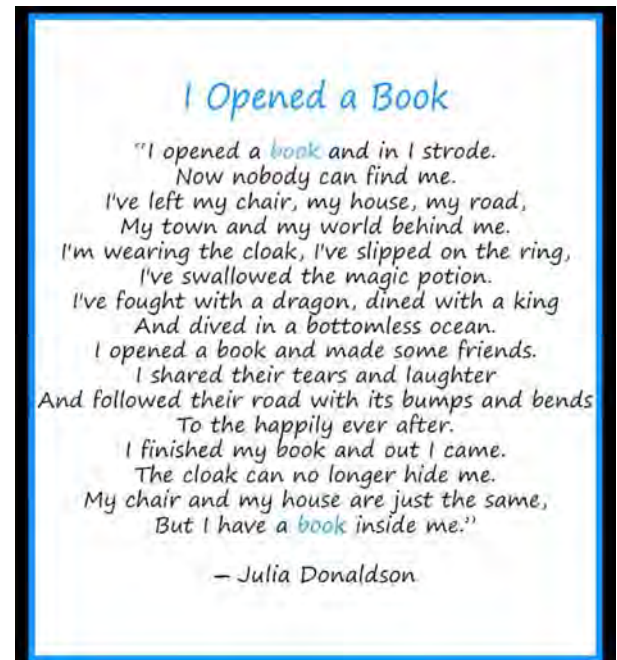
*For now, I look forward to keeping in touch and perhaps having a chance to meet in person at some point.*

Sam

## LIBRARY REACHES OUT

By Rina Krautwirth

Hedi Steinberg Library has been featuring some creative messages. Here is one that was recently posted.



## NEW DATABASES

By Marlene Schiffman

On the right-hand side of the Library Home page there is a list of new databases. I surveyed a few of these to see how they work. [Alhatorah.org](http://Alhatorah.org) describes itself as, "A Tanakh study resource that provides texts, techniques, and reference tools on a clear graphical user interface. Includes a customizable online Mikraot Gedolot, Tanakh Lab, concordance, and lexicon." I input the word

“yashar (straight, right, just, or upright)” and got the result that its use is mostly in the book of Job. Then I tried “tsedek (righteousness).” It was found overwhelmingly in Psalms and Isaiah. The handy concordance feature and dictionary with English definitions and source verses is a boon to users. It will certainly come in handy in Judaica cataloging as we consult those reference sources on a daily basis when dealing with Hebrew titles and mandatory transliterations.

Sometimes searches turned up unrelated topics; other features are still in progress; in others the layout is confusing and difficult to read. Nevertheless, it contains maps and timelines of where and when the major commentators lived and an image collection of art in the Bible. This database is off to a good start and will probably be refined as evaluations come in.

Next I tried my hand at [Semantic Scholar](#), funded by Paul Allen, Microsoft co-founder, and led by Dr. Oren Etzioni, a world-renowned researcher and professor in the field of artificial intelligence. It gives access to over 42 million peer-reviewed studies and connects them by showing which papers were most often quoted by others. I searched the term “HIV” and found about 905,000 results. A graph indicated that in 1936 there were 6 papers on the subject. The number of studies has been rising steadily since, with over 50,000 research papers published last year alone. So far this year, 44,000 papers have already been published. It is truly amazing how all this wealth of information can be managed, collected, and made available for searching.

[The Milken Archive of Jewish Music: The American Experience](#) explains that it is the Largest collection of American Jewish music including recordings, oral histories, and essays with liner notes that examine the cultural-historical contexts of the music. I sampled some of the early Western Sephardic liturgical music. The notes include a full description of when, by whom, and for what occasion the work was composed and where it was performed. Also provided are English lyrics. Composers range from Ben Zion Shenker, famous for his “Eshet Hayil,” Psalm 131, to Philip Glass who set Psalm 126 to music, performed in Lincoln Center by the American Symphony Orchestra. The collection is broken down by genres and time periods, and the recordings are very clear. While there are obvious research uses for this database, it

might inspire you just to listen to it all day.

This amazing array of databases will bring all kinds of knowledge to our fingertips almost effortlessly. In some cases, the problem may be rather to narrow down the search so as not to be flooded with information.



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