



# Branches

**News From the Program in Jewish Studies at Rice University**

Issue 12 • Fall 2017



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# Director's Note



Photograph by Jeff Fitlow

Excitement about the new academic year was palpable when O-Week, or freshmen orientation, began in mid-August. The Program in Jewish Studies saw great interest at the O-Week Academic Fair, where first-year students learn about Rice's academic programs and course offerings. New students stopped by to meet faculty; hear about the nine courses we were offering for the fall semester; and learn about other Jewish studies fellowships, events and opportunities. Students registered, classes began, and program faculty and students dove into the semester.

And then Harvey hit.

Although the hurricane devastated Houston, dumping 52 inches of rain on Houston in only four days, the Rice campus weathered the hurricane very well. Houston was under water, but as a result of many years of careful planning and preparation, the university's crisis management team minimized the effects of the storm on campus. Under the leadership of Marie Lynn Miranda, university provost, and Kevin Kirby, vice president for administration, the team sent out regular updates to the entire campus community. Facilities Engineering and Planning conducted damage assessments and made necessary repairs, even while the storm was raging. John Hutchinson, dean of undergraduates, and his wife, Paula, moved on campus to help take care of students. The college magisters gave lectures to entertain and occupy residents of their colleges. Housing and Dining did what they could to maintain uninterrupted meals. And on Sept. 5, having missed only one week, the

Rice campus opened again and classes resumed.

While the Rice campus made it through the storm relatively unscathed, the situation in Houston looked rather different. The city was devastated by widespread flooding and over 30,000 people were displaced by the storm. The Rice community was eager to help Houston get back on its feet. Student volunteers were organized by the Rice Harvey Action Team (R-HAT), and no fewer than 1,800 Rice students fanned out across the city to help. The Rice administration made half a million dollars available to support innovative proposals for Rice's engagement with Houston's recovery.

The Jewish community in Houston was especially hard hit by the storm. The Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center sustained extensive damage, taking on 10 feet of water on its lower level. Beth Israel, Beth Yeshurun and United Orthodox Synagogues (UOS) were all flooded to varying degrees, and some congregations are still in temporary quarters. Again, Rice was ready to help. Our students went out to assist with the recovery efforts, organized by R-HAT and Chabad, among others. Joshua Furman, the Stanford and Joan Alexander Postdoctoral Fellow, and Melissa Kean, university historian, went to UOS and Beth Yeshurun in the days after the storm to save and archive irreplaceable historical documents detailing the history of these Houston Jewish community institutions. It is our hope that these materials will form the very beginning of a new archive at Rice of Houston Jewish history. We plan to collect and preserve the historical documents of the Jewish community in Houston and Galveston and to make these documents available to historians, scholars and students with an interest in the Jewish history of Houston.

This edition of Branches is devoted to Hurricane Harvey. The damage Harvey has inflicted on Houston has been devastating, and we feel an obligation to offer our resources to help in any way we can, through recovery, rebuilding, prevention and preserving the precious documents of our shared history.

Sincerely,

Matthias Henze  
Founding director, Program in Jewish Studies  
Isla Carroll and Percy E. Turner Professor of  
Biblical Studies



Please visit our new website at [jewishstudies.rice.edu](http://jewishstudies.rice.edu).

# Israel Sends Aid to Houston

By Jessica Blumfield, Academic Affairs Officer, and Idan Schwartz, Cultural Affairs Officer, Consulate General of Israel in Houston

In an unprecedented show of support, Israel sent help to Houston in many forms. The Israeli consulate worked to bring emotional, material and financial aid to the Houston Jewish community after Harvey.

In the wake of Hurricane Harvey, the state of Israel stepped in to help Houston recover. The Consulate General of Israel to the Southwest U.S., based here in Houston, alongside special groups of Israeli volunteers, have been very involved in posthurricane rebuilding efforts.

Israel's Magen David Adom (the national emergency medical, disaster, ambulance and blood bank service) worked alongside the Red Cross to provide aid to those in need at various shelters and communities across Texas. This is the first time that the U.S. Red Cross has invited Israel to assist them, in a partnership emblematic of the relationship between Israel and America.

But Magen David Adom was not the only Israeli disaster relief group to come to the rescue. IsraAid, an Israel-based humanitarian aid agency, also came to Texas. They assisted with heavy work, ripping out sheetrock, flooring and furniture, and also provided water, cleaning



**Top:** Medical clowns visit schools affected by the flood. **Below:** Medical clowns and the consulate team

supplies and various other necessities donated by the Israeli Embassy in Washington, D.C.



Magen David Adom volunteers and the deputy consul.

Israel also sent aid to help with more intangible effects of the storm. On September 7, a pair of medical clowns serving as goodwill ambassadors arrived from Israel. The team visited several hospitals, schools and shelters around Houston to assist children dealing with trauma and illness. The team provided therapy to the shelter at NRG Stadium, the Ronald McDonald

House, the Caroline School, Shriner's Hospital, several Jewish private schools and the Houston Independent School District.

The consulate has also sought aid for the Houston Jewish community at the highest levels, reaching out to Israeli governmental agencies for assistance. Recently, the Israeli government approved a \$1 million grant to be used for rebuilding Jewish community facilities and institutions damaged by Hurricane Harvey. This marks the first time in history that the State of Israel has donated money to a Jewish community in America, an example of the imperative for Jewish communities around the world to support each other. ■

# Rice Students Step Up to Help

By Sonia Hamer '18

While the Rice campus was not directly affected by Hurricane Harvey, many Rice students volunteered in the community in the days after the storm. Chabad organized a volunteer effort in conjunction with Rice's Harvey Action Team (R-HAT) and students worked on relief efforts in many parts of the Jewish community in Houston.

Three days after Harvey passed, I drove through Meyerland for the first time. Already, the streets were lined with the contents of people's homes — sheetrock, furniture, flooring and piles and piles of waterlogged books. Many of the houses, their walls cut away, had become archways, picture frames that could be seen right through. Others, less damaged, still bore the marks of 2, 3, 4 feet of water. Even now, one can still see the aftermath piled along certain streets. People have not moved on, even if the news cycle has.

But, as always, there is brightness in this hardship. Sorrow and joy, after all. So allow me to say this: I have lived in Houston my entire life. I remember Tropical Storm Allison and Hurricanes Rita and Ike. But I don't remember anything like our recent storm, or anything like the enormous efforts put forth by our various communities in its aftermath. Rice's Jewish community is no exception. Before the flooding had even receded, the group message for Jewish students was abuzz with efforts to organize and volunteer at George R. Brown. Within days, Rabbi Amy Coben Weiss had begun organizing a relief effort known as Undies for Everyone. Rabbi Weiss's husband, Kenny (also Rabbi Weiss), quickly made use of his position as executive director of Houston Hillel to drum up student support for the organization. Rice students could be seen across the street at Congregation Emanu El unloading truckloads of new underwear. All told, almost 300,000 pairs of unused underthings were distributed across the Greater Houston area, not to mention well over 100,000 more pairs, which went to other areas affected by the storm.

The Rice chapter of Chabad was also incredibly active after the storm. According to Manuel Croitoru, a Rice junior who organized many of Chabad's philanthropic activities, the kosher kitchen at Aishel House produced almost 200 meals for people in need. Other students were sent to clean houses. Not all of these individuals were from Rice. Aishel House hosted several hundred Chabad members from seven other universities both inside and outside of Texas. These students traveled to Houston expressly to help in its time of need.

Over on Sunset Boulevard, Congregation Emanu El began a day camp, where many Rice students worked. Others were



**Above:** Students pack up salvaged books at Congregation Beth Yeshurun.

**Right:** Students take a break while helping Meyerland residents recover from the flood.

sent to Meyerland to help with cleanup and demolition, some in coordination with R-HAT and others. I worked at the JCC's supply distribution center alongside many other Rice students. We received and distributed various supplies for those who came to pick up cleaning supplies, diapers, water and boxes at the center. The swiftness, variety and overall coordination of these diverse efforts is truly astounding. I have every confidence that as a community, we can carry this energy forward into all of the work which has yet to be done. ■



I have lived in Houston my entire life. I remember Tropical Storm Allison and Hurricanes Rita and Ike. But I don't remember anything like our recent storm, or anything like the enormous efforts put forth by our various communities in its aftermath. Rice's Jewish community is no exception.



# Student Profiles



## Daniel Cohen

Hometown: Newton, Mass.  
 Majors: Linguistics and Cognitive Sciences  
 Minor: Jewish Studies

“Jewish studies at Rice has allowed to me examine Judaism from a sociological and historical perspective and has contributed to my personal understanding

of my own Jewish identity. In particular, I have had the opportunity to examine how Jewishness is both portrayed and widely perceived through my classes in Jewish studies.”

*Daniel is the current vice president of the Jewish Studies Student Association.*



## Ariana Engles

Hometown: Austin, Texas  
 Majors: Kinesiology-Sports Medicine and Religion  
 Minors: Poverty, Justice and Human Capabilities and Jewish Studies

“My first taste of the Program in Jewish Studies at Rice was through Joshua Furman’s Becoming Americans course, which

traveled to New York City last spring. That course, aside from being one of the best I have taken at Rice, was also one of the most eye-opening and influential courses of my undergraduate career. I really appreciate both the interdisciplinary nature of Jewish studies and the passion of everyone involved in the program.”

*Ariana is the current treasurer of the Jewish Studies Student Association.*

**Thank you to Kenny and Ziggy’s Delicatessen and deli maven Ziggy Gruber for hosting Joshua Furman’s Jewish Food class (JWST 301) for an evening of traditional Eastern European dishes and Jewish food history.**



# Saving Houston Jewish History

By Joshua Furman, the Stanford and Joan Alexander Postdoctoral Fellow in Jewish Studies, and Melissa Kean, University Historian

Hurricane Harvey flooded a number of local Jewish institutions, including Beth Yeshurun Synagogue, United Orthodox Synagogues and the Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center. Joshua Furman and Melissa Kean sprang into action to save what they could of the history of the community.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey's devastation in Houston, rescue teams combed the neighborhoods of Meyerland and Willow Meadows, which are home to many of the city's Jewish institutions and families. Courageous men and women in helicopters, boats and kayaks saved countless people from

flooded streets and houses. In the days and weeks that followed, as historians, we undertook a rescue mission of our own — saving precious, irreplaceable documents and photographs that tell the story of Houston's Jewish community.

The storm caused severe damage to at least three of Houston's synagogues

and to the Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center (ERJCC), all of which are located near Braes Bayou and took in several feet of water. Additionally, many of the personal possessions of Houston's Jewish families were ruined by flooding and are at risk of being discarded and lost forever. In the days after the hurricane, donning protective masks and gloves, we went into a flooded storage closet at United Orthodox Synagogues (UOS) of Houston to rescue wet and moldy binders filled with board meeting minutes, some of which dated back as early as 1937. Other materials retrieved from UOS included original cemetery records and copies of a Golden Jubilee commemorative book from 1967. To begin the process of drying out these books, we placed sheets of white

Melissa Kean dries out important Jewish documents.



# The New Normal

By Rabbi Jill Levy, director of the Bobbi and Vic Samuels Center for Jewish Living and Learning at the Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center

At present, unfortunately, the rich history of this Jewish community in the nation's fourth-largest city remains relatively undocumented, and so much has been lost in the flood.



printer paper between the soggy pages of each volume, and at times used a blow dryer to remove moisture from the oldest records. At Congregation Beth Yeshurun, we assisted in the rescue of materials damaged in the synagogue's Heritage Room: photographs of confirmation classes and synagogue events, copies of synagogue bulletins, and audio recordings of High Holiday sermons and services from the past several decades.

The study of Jewish life in Houston touches on themes of central importance to understanding ethnic history in the United States — immigration, acculturation, adaptation, socioeconomic mobility and interfaith relations. At present, unfortunately, the rich history of this Jewish community in the nation's fourth-largest city remains relatively undocumented, and so much has been lost in the flood. We hope that these rescued materials, along with others we are working to identify and acquire, will form the basis for a permanent archive at Rice University for the study and preservation of Jewish history in Houston and the surrounding region, allowing us to preserve some of the precious materials that remain.

To consult with us about items of historical significance in your possession, please contact Joshua Furman at [jf36@rice.edu](mailto:jf36@rice.edu) or Melissa Kean at [kean@rice.edu](mailto:kean@rice.edu). ■

During Hurricane Harvey, the campus of the Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center (JCC) flooded badly. Located mere steps from Braes Bayou, the JCC saw extensive damage to its main building, which took in nearly 10 feet of water, as well as the Bertha Alyce Early Childhood School. Parts of the JCC opened Oct. 16 but it has yet to fully recover.

I am one of the “lucky” ones. My home has never flooded. I have never referred to myself as a “floodie.” I didn't think I had a right to use that word since my house has stayed dry in a zip code that has had three floods in three years. I am now starting to change my mind.

The day after the hurricane, I saw a photo of water up to the second-floor landing of the JCC. The JCC's first floor, or garden level, was once home to my office, the offices of 14 of my colleagues, the Meals on Wheels kitchen, three art rooms, a dance studio and several classrooms. Even after seeing the photo, it did not register that it was all gone. Literally everything on the bottom level was destroyed. There was no going back to find belongings, no looking for sacred texts to bury, no chance to step into my office one last time to say goodbye. Nothing was salvageable, not one thing. All I could do was take the remaining mezuzot off the door posts. I took them to a sofer (scribe) who reported back to me that they were, unsurprisingly, all ruined.

The truth is that I do not miss the contents of my office: most of it is replaceable and I have come to terms with the loss of the rest. Much more challenging is the alienation from the connections that formed on that lower level of the JCC. Those of us who worked on the garden level will probably never return to that space. We had a bond, a shared purpose and worked together across depart-

ments on a frequent basis. The JCC has been closed for over a month and we are all dispersed — working from home, Starbucks or our tennis center. Soon, the building will open and we will have a “new normal,” with offices in different locations. I am excited to open, to have a real office again, and to again provide programs and space to our constituents. At the same time, I am frightened of the first day. I may not have evacuated my house but I did get exiled from my second home. I have lost not just objects, but the equally important intangibles: personal space, connections to people and my own sense of organization, which I normally pride myself on.

Harvey has left us all suffering. We have lost homes, offices and, for some, just a basic sense of security. The truth is that we are all “floodies” in some way. The “new normal” is upon us and all we can do is dive in and embrace it together as a community. ■



The remains of Jill Levy's office on the first floor of the Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center.

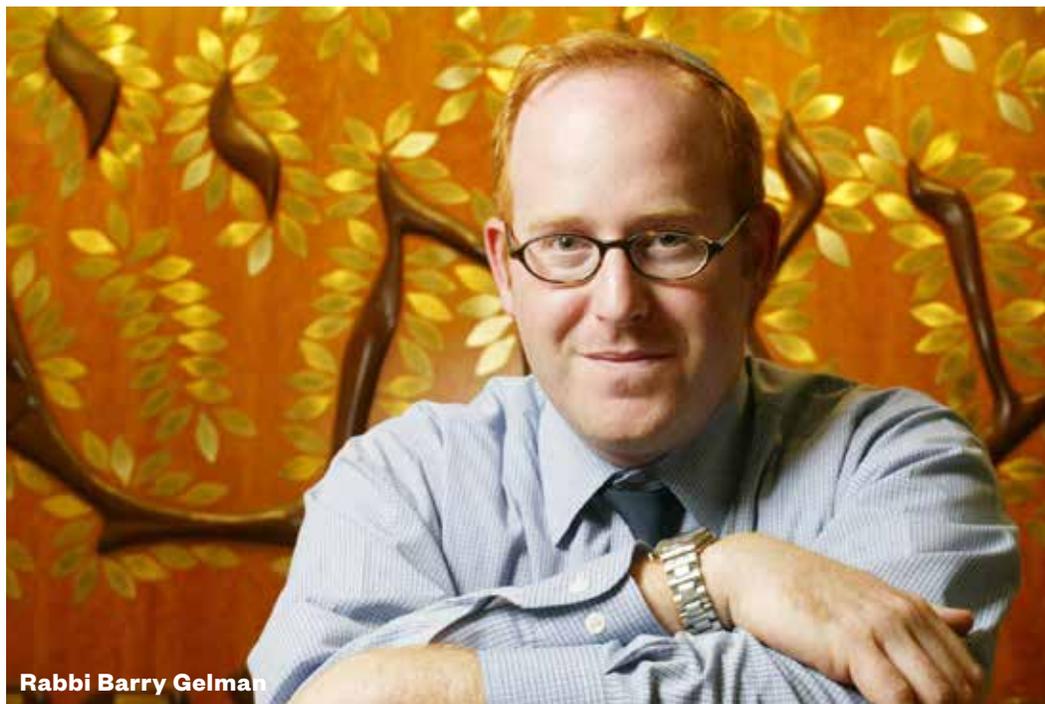
# The Value of Community

By Rabbi Barry Gelman,  
United Orthodox Synagogues

United Orthodox Synagogues, located in the Willow Meadows neighborhood of Houston, has sustained damage in each of the last three flooding events. Hurricane Harvey not only destroyed the synagogue's main building, but also flooded the homes of most of the synagogue's members, who live in the neighborhood and form a tight-knit community.

On August 27, our synagogue and over one-third of our members were flooded by the rains of Hurricane Harvey. The result of the flooding was devastating, essentially destroying our synagogue and displacing hundreds of people. Many of our daily prayer books, all of our High Holiday prayer books and many of the books in our library were destroyed by the waters. Sadly, our beautiful sanctuary was ruined and a place that has meant so much to so many will, likely, never be the same again. A room that holds memories of so many happy occasions has become a place of tears.

Difficult questions loom large over our community as we consider the future of our congregation and the ability of our community members to bounce back, especially since some have flooded three times over the last three years. Throughout the process of flooding, cleanup and recovery, our community has exhibited amazing resilience. I firmly believe that our ability to overcome is the result of years of community building. We have shared so much together that we have really



Rabbi Barry Gelman

become family.

One of the central prayers of the High Holidays is the refrain: U'teshuva, u'tefilla, u'tzedakah ma'avirin et ro'ah ha'gezeirah (Repentance, prayer and charity remove the evil of the decree). We often think this prayer means that these three things remove the evil decree itself. That is not what the prayer means. It means they remove the evil of the decree. Despite the existence of pain and suffering, repentance, prayer and charity help to provide some means of dealing with the difficulties brought about by the tragic and terrible events.

Judaism understands that in order to survive in this world, people need other people. It is one of the universal truths stated at the beginning of the Torah: Lo tov heyot adam l'vado (It is not good for a person to be alone). Knowing that

other people are in a similar situation is soothing, and being connected to a greater community helps one bear the hardest pain.

Through community we develop resilience, the ability to bounce back after encountering difficulty. Harvard University psychologist George Vaillant likens resilience to "a twig with a fresh green living core. When twisted out of shape, such a twig bends, but it does not break; instead, it springs back and continues growing."

We have learned from the past so that we can be ready to help as many people as possible. We have activated tzedakah — the grand idea that when people take care of each other, then we can overcome so much more than we originally thought. Many of us have experienced it firsthand and can testify to it. ■

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# The Time for Prayer

By Rabbi Ranon Teller, Congregation Brith Shalom



Rabbi Ranon Teller

We don't pray for God to modify the laws of physics and the science of meteorology. We pray to God to help us intensify our response and our compassion and our empathy.

This sermon was delivered on Shabbat morning, Sept. 2, 2017, following Hurricane Harvey. Congregation Brith Shalom hosted the flagship Congregation Beth Yeshurun because its building was destroyed and the homes of four of its rabbis flooded.

The formula is simple and clear: those who didn't flood help those who flooded. That's it. The partnership between our synagogues is a demonstration of this formula and dictates the strategy we need to move forward as a Jewish community, as a Houston community and as individuals. The floodwaters were random. The flood was chaos. Our partnership and the strategy to help those in need bring order. ...

Bellaire never floods. But, by Sunday afternoon, our street had lost power and the houses on either side of us were flooded. Because our house has two stories and is newish construction, it hadn't flooded ... yet.

The floodwaters were still rising. The water filled the street, the sidewalk, our front yard ... it was a river from our doorstep to the doorstep across the street. We were trapped. It was time to shelter in place. ... The floodwaters never came in. We were some of the lucky few.

Yesterday, I checked in with one of our neighbors. His home was demolished and he and his family were loading up a U-Haul truck with the few possessions that had survived. We exchanged a few polite comments. Like the rest, he reassured me that, "It's just stuff," and he thanked me for my hospitality during the storm. Then, he reported that his church took in water and asked me about my synagogue. I told him that it was dry, and with a tinge of survivor's guilt, I added, "I can't explain it." He replied, "C'mon rabbi, I think we both know what happened. ..." I smiled uncomfortably at the suggestion that because of my rabbinic status, God had protected my family and me, my home and my synagogue from the flood. I smiled and politely took my leave.

On the short walk back to my dry home, my neighbor's comment inspired my first opportunity for rabbinic reflection. There had actually been a moment before the flood that might have been appropriate for prayer. We were gathered around the table, eating what we

thought might be our last full meal together before we went into flood survival mode. I could have gathered us in prayer. I even recalled it having crossed my mind. But I didn't. ... I was occupied with the safety of my family. I was preparing my house for the flood. I was wrapping the couch in tarps. I was gauging the height of the water. I was texting the authorities to prepare an evacuation plan in case the floodwaters reached the second story of our house or we ran out of food. I was not in prayer mode. ...

We don't pray for God to work for us. We pray for us to work for God. We don't pray for God to modify the laws of physics and the science of meteorology. We pray to God to help us intensify our response and our compassion and our empathy. Our rabbis teach that planet Earth acts independently of God's will. In the Hebrew, the rabbinic quote is poetic: "Olam noheg k'minhago." It translates to something like, the world turns on its own.

During a flood is not a time for prayer. As Moses learned before crossing the sea, when it's time for action, we don't stop to pray. During a flood is time for action. But, after the flood, for the overwhelming relief effort, prayer is essential.

Today, the process begins and we're going to need everything that religion has to offer in order to rebuild. We're going to need everything that community has to offer to rebuild our synagogues. We're going to need everything that prayer has to offer to give us the strength and the determination and the constancy to rebuild our homes. We're going to need chesed (loving kindness). We're going to need leadership and unity. We're going to need God and all the goodness that God manifests in this world. ■

# Book Excerpt: ‘Mind the Gap: How the Jewish Writings Between the Old and New Testament Help Us Understand Jesus’

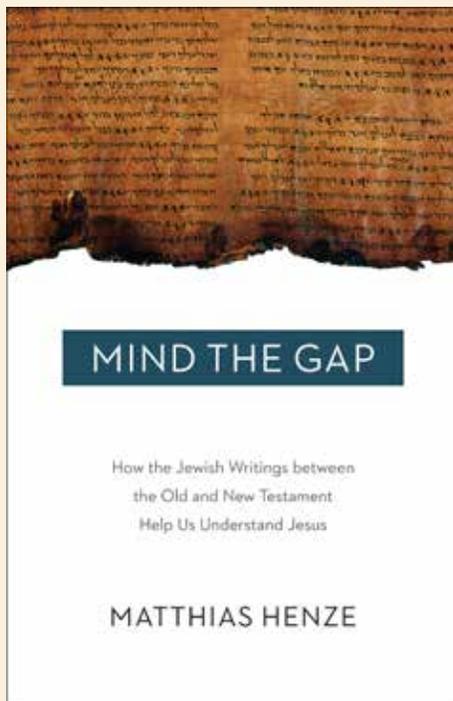
**By Matthias Henze, the Isla Carroll and Percy E. Turner Professor of Hebrew Bible and Early Judaism**

As a teenager growing up in Hanover in northern Germany, I developed an interest in early Christianity and began to read the Bible. One day, as I was browsing in a local bookstore, I saw an announcement that Schalom Ben-Chorin was coming to town to give a public lecture on Jesus. Schalom Ben-Chorin was a Jewish journalist and scholar living in Jerusalem, who frequently returned to his native Germany to give talks and teach classes. Over the years, Ben-Chorin became instrumental in initiating the German-Jewish dialogue after the Holocaust. According to the announcement, his talk was titled “Brother Jesus: The Nazarene through Jewish Eyes” (some years later, Ben-Chorin would publish a book with the same title). Since I had never heard a presentation by a Jewish scholar, let alone on Jesus, I became very excited and realized that this would be a special event I had to attend.

The auditorium was packed that evening, and the audience was clearly mesmerized. I don’t remember many of the details of the talk, but I do remember that the evening made a lasting impression on me. Schalom Ben-Chorin was a Jewish scholar, soft-spoken and mild-mannered, and obviously deeply learned. The Holocaust was still in living memory, only forty years prior. The scars of the war were everywhere. Here was a Jewish scholar who had come all the way from Israel, and who stretched out his hand as a demonstrative gesture of reconciliation. Ben-Chorin had come to study with us. There was not a trace of reproach or accusation in his presentation, but the desire to move on, to study together, and to read the New Testament from a Jewish perspective. I had never seen anything quite like this, and, judging by the reaction from the audience, I was not alone.

But it wasn’t just the particular situation of learning from a Jewish scholar

in post-war Germany that moved me. As I listened to Schalom Ben-Chorin, it occurred to me how little I knew about the world of Jesus, in spite of having studied the New Testament. Jesus was fully immersed in the Jewish world of his time, but I did not recognize or understand



**There is something unsettling about coming to realize that the person who stands at the center of the Christian faith, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph and Mary, was not a Christian but a Jew.**

much of that world. It seemed foreign to me, remote. I did not recognize the Judaism of Jesus because all I knew was the Old Testament, but the religion of the Old Testament is not the Judaism of Jesus. While in the New Testament, Jesus studies and teaches in the synagogues, there are no synagogues in the Old Testament. While in the New Testament Jesus’ disciples call him “Rabbi,” there

are no rabbis in the Old Testament. While in the New Testament Jesus is often involved in conversations with the Pharisees, there are no Pharisees in the Old Testament. And while in the New Testament Jesus expels demons and unclean spirits, there are no demons in the Old Testament. The list goes on. These are not incidental matters in the life of Jesus. They all stem from the Jewish world to which Jesus belonged, a world about which I knew so little apart from what I had read in the New Testament. I felt that I was rather ill equipped to be an informed reader of the Bible, whereas for Schalom Ben-Chorin there was nothing strange about this. Clearly he did not need to be told what a synagogue is or a rabbi, or who the Pharisees were. To the contrary, he was intimately familiar with the world of his “brother Jesus.”

There is something unsettling about coming to realize that the person who stands at the center of the Christian faith, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph and Mary, was not a Christian but a Jew. For me, it did not help much to recognize how little I knew of Jesus’ own religious background. It was much more comfortable to think of Jesus as one of us, somebody who was exactly like we are today, sharing the same theology, the same political points of view, and certainly the same religion. As I once heard it put, God created humankind in His image (an allusion to the creation of humans in Genesis 1:26-27), and we are quick to return the favor. We like to think of God and of Jesus as if they are just like us. In this reading, there is nothing strange or surprising about the Bible, because we have turned the Bible into a mirror in which all we can see is ourselves. But we cannot see what is actually there: synagogues, rabbis, the Sabbath, Pharisees, demons, and the resurrection — in short, the world of Jesus. ■

# Advisory Board Spotlight

By Carolyn and Jay Kaplan '80

**The Program in Jewish Studies advisory board is a group of community leaders who volunteer their time to help support the program. Jay Kaplan '80 joined the board this fall.**

We are proud of our long association with Rice and appreciate all it has provided our family. Our commitment to the Program in Jewish Studies is a natural extension of how we show our gratitude for the opportunities that Rice has afforded our family for three generations.

We support the Program in Jewish Studies at Rice because they understand the importance of teaching the beauty, ritual and history of Judaism to all students, regardless of background.

For Jewish students in their formative college years, who more often than not know little about their faith, the Program in Jewish Studies offers opportunity for Jewish education that can provide the impetus for an adult life as a

committed and involved Jew.

For non-Jewish students, it is equally important that those not born of our faith can learn its history and culture, which can lead to better understanding between adherents of different religions.

Our son, Jack Kaplan, is a senior in Baker College studying mechanical engineering. Our father, Charles Kaplan, graduated from Rice with a degree in mathematics and physics in 1947. In addition to providing three generations of Kaplans with a great education, Rice has provided a treasured link between the generations.

We appreciate Rice being one of the few colleges in the south that did not have an outright ban on Jewish students or a Jewish quota. Charles was a participant in the Menorah Society, a precursor to Hillel. Many of his Jewish classmates became leaders in the community. We hope for the same for our son, who is an active Hillel participant.

Because Rice students become leaders in their respective professional fields and communities, the educational opportunities provided by the Program in Jewish Studies at Rice have the potential to influence and educate far beyond the boundaries of Rice and the Jewish community. ■

Carolyn and Jay Kaplan



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**We support the Program in Jewish Studies at Rice because they understand the importance of teaching the beauty, ritual and history of Judaism to all students, regardless of background.**  
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