



the graduate school

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Highlights 2007-08 Academic Year

Schechter Takes First Place in Jewish Studies Enrollment

The Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies is now the largest M.A. program in Jewish Studies in the State of Israel. According to recent statistics published for the year 2006-07, Schechter is now No. 1 in Jewish Studies enrollment, pulling ahead of all other Israeli universities and moving up from its second place ranking of last year.

Institution Number of Students

Institution	Number of Students
Schechter Institute	508
Haifa University	497
Bar Ilan University	426
Hebrew University	420
Ben Gurion University	165
Tel Aviv University	100

Some Demographics...

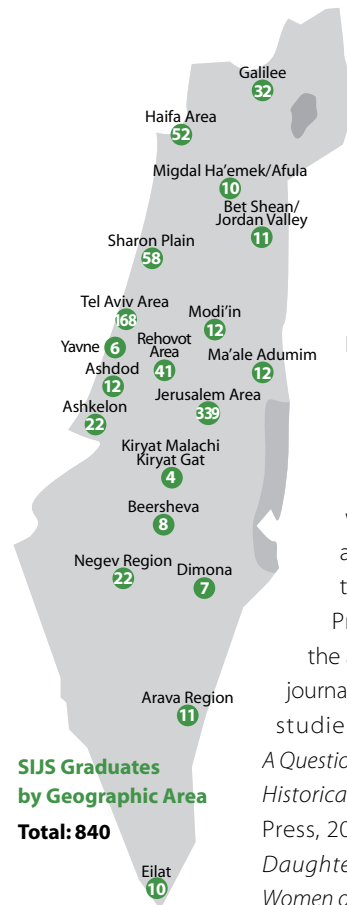
80% of Schechter's students, numbering 550 in 2007-08, are working in the Israeli educational system or with Israeli community centers. 70% of the student body is comprised of women. Two-thirds of the student population resides outside of Jerusalem, from Kiryat Shmoneh to Eilat. The average student age is 41.

New M.A. Concentration in Sephardic Studies

A new M.A. track in *Sephardic Jewry and Jews of Islamic Countries*, the fourteenth track in Jewish Studies at Schechter, and unique in Israel, was introduced in 2007-08 as part of the implementation of the Board-approved 2005 Strategic Plan. The program of studies acquaints the student with the diverse worlds that developed in the Spanish Jewish community, in the Sephardic Diaspora as well as in the Jewish communities of Islamic lands in medieval and modern times. The track offers courses on Spanish Jewry, Conversos, the history of the Jews of Iran, Iraq, Syria and North Africa, and the status of Jewish women in Islamic culture.

Academic Appointments

Prof. Renée Levine Melammed will assume the position of Dean in October 2008 when Dr. Guy Miron steps down at the end of his term. **Dr. Shula Laderman** will become Assistant Dean of Student Affairs. **Dr. Tamar Kadari** has received a faculty appointment as Lecturer in Midrash in a Tenure Track and will coordinate the M.A. Track in Judaism and the Arts. **Dr. Alex Sinclair** will join the faculty as a Lecturer in Education and will serve as Academic Advisor to the TALI Leadership Program.



SIJS Graduates by Geographic Area

Total: 840

Women Chosen to Lead Graduate School

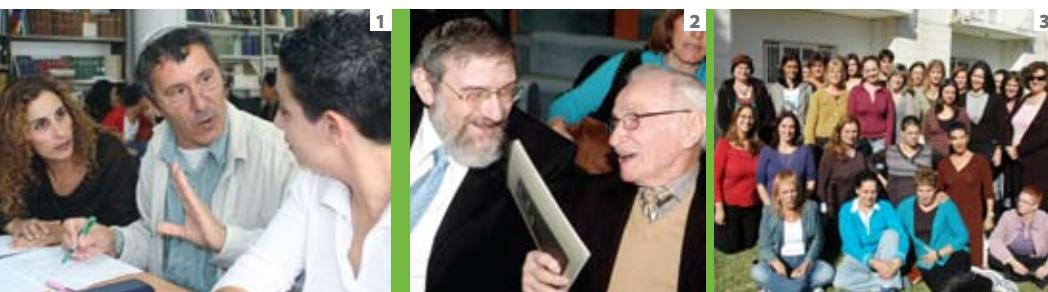
Renée Levine Melammed, newly appointed Dean of the Graduate School, is Associate Professor of Jewish history at the Schechter Institute. Professor Levine Melammed has headed the Women's and Gender Studies M.A. Track for twelve years. Among her publications are numerous articles dealing with women in Jewish history, and with the Conversos in the time of the Spanish Inquisition. Professor Levine Melammed is the academic editor of *Nashim*, the journal of gender and Jewish women's studies. Her most recent book is *A Question of Identity: Iberian Conversos in Historical Perspective* (Oxford University Press, 2004). Her first book, *Heretics or Daughters of Israel: The Crypto-Jewish Women of Castile* (Oxford University Press, 1999), received two National Jewish Book Awards. She is currently completing a book on pre-WWII Jewish Salonika as reflected in the Ladino poetry of a Sephardic woman.

Dr. Shula Laderman assumes the position of Assistant Dean of Student Affairs. She coordinated the Judaism and the Arts M.A. Track from 2005-08 and was chosen as Kekst Fellow for 2007-09. Dr. Laderman is currently completing *God's Blueprint of Creation*, to be published by E.J. Brill in Leiden.

TALI Leadership Development Course Leads Directly to M.A.

In 2007-08, most of the TALI teachers who completed the Leadership Development Course decided to continue on for an M.A. degree. Since its inception in 2001, 183 TALI principals and lead staff have studied in the two-year accredited course, with the vast majority of them opting to complete their M.A. degrees in the third year.

A grant from the Kochav Trust continues to enable Schechter faculty members to conduct research, publish and share their findings at academic conferences throughout the world.



1. M.A. students discussing a passage from the Talmud 2. Left: Liebhaber Prize recipient MK Rabbi Michael Melchior with Rabbi Marc Liebhaber 3. TALI Leadership Development Course participants 4+5: The future Jerusalem Schechter Campus. Architect, Ada Karmi 6+7: The future Schechter Center for Jewish Culture in Neve Zedek. Architect, Michal Kimmel

New Schechter Campuses

The Schechter Institutes, Inc. has embarked on two significant capital projects: the New Schechter Campus in Jerusalem and the Schechter Center for Jewish Culture in the Neve Zedek neighborhood of Tel Aviv.

Schechter Jerusalem Campus

Schechter's staggering growth – from five students when it opened its doors in 1984 – to 550 students today, points to the resounding success of its educational programs...and to the urgent need for additional space. In 2007-08, major excavation work at the building site was completed and work has begun on laying the foundations for the first building of the campus complex, the **Legacy Heritage Fund Limited Classroom Building**, with a projected completion date in early 2010.

The ground floor of the classroom building will house the spacious **Harvey L. Miller Family Bet Midrash (Study Hall)**, designed to meet the needs of Schechter's growing student population. There, rabbinical students and M.A. students will come together under one roof for the unifying study of Torah. The ground floor will also house an art gallery for permanent and visiting exhibits, as well as for the works of Schechter students.

Liebhaber Center for Jewish Education Dedicated

The future site of the **Rabbi Marc N. and Dr. Henia Liebhaber Center for Jewish Education** was dedicated in December 2007 in the presence of Rabbi Liebhaber's family. Adjacent to the current Schechter building, the Center will be an integral part of the new Schechter Campus, occupying 20,000 square feet on four levels.

Schechter Center for Jewish Culture in Tel Aviv

The Schechter Center for Jewish Culture in Neve Zedek will add spiritual renewal to physical renewal in the heart of Tel Aviv. The Center, which has been made possible through a generous grant by the **Legacy Heritage Fund Limited**, will be the new home of the Midreshet Iyun Outreach Program and Kehillat Sinai Masorti congregation. In 2007-08, architect Michal Kimmel finalized building plans. Permits were obtained for the renovation of the historic 19th Century building and courtyard, and for the construction of the TALI Early Childhood Center. Construction will commence in November 2008 with the opening scheduled for the end of 2009. The Center will house a Bet Midrash, classrooms and synagogue sanctuary (8,000 sq. ft.), a courtyard with outdoor auditorium and café (3,500 sq. ft.) and the TALI Early Childhood Center (4,500 sq. ft.).



Prof. David Golinkin inspects campus excavation work

Special Scholarships for Ethiopian Immigrant Students

Special scholarships for students from the Ethiopian immigrant community have been awarded to nine students, all of whom are talented community workers and teachers, committed to working with Ethiopian families as facilitators, teachers and tutors. Most of the students are enrolled in the Family and Community Studies M.A. track. The program will enhance their skills as community educators while helping them to discover a meaningful context for their own particular community history and traditions from Ethiopia.

Development Town Scholarships Help Israel's Periphery

Full tuition was awarded to 45 teachers from development towns and underprivileged neighborhoods in 2007-08. Schechter has been granting scholarships to educators from Israel's periphery since 2001. To date, the program has sponsored 106 teachers, with 54 receiving M.A. degrees in Jewish Studies.

Record-breaking Recruitment with New Campaign Slogan

Schechter recruited a record 155 new M.A. students in 2007. The number of registered students has more than doubled since the start of this decade. This growth is attributed to the annual **Davidson Scholarships** to first-year students; the "word of mouth" campaign by graduates and students that remains one of Schechter's most powerful recruitment tools; **Racheli Brandshaft**, an effective recruiter who is a Schechter M.A. graduate; the utilization of new media outlets for increased exposure; and "Open House" days at Schechter at which potential students met with faculty advisors.





Angdiusa (“Angel”) Desta

Occupational Advisor, ‘Wisconsin Plan’ Employment Program,
Jerusalem

On the Spectrum

Angdiusa was born in Gondar, Ethiopia, where her father was a farmer. She arrived in Israel with *Operation Solomon* in 1991, at the age of 8. She and her seven brothers and sisters are determined to preserve their Ethiopian Jewish traditions in the context of their evolving Israeli identity. No longer living at home, they return to their parents’ home in Afula almost every Shabbat. Angdiusa’s job is challenging, yet emotionally draining. She handles sixty cases, accompanying the unemployed and weakest elements of Israeli society through a complicated process with the objective of finding permanent employment and restoring a sense of self.

On Defining Jewish Life and Learning

“My job is to remove all obstacles preventing my client from working. These are not just physical. I deal with frustration and anger and self-pity so that much of my job is helping heal these emotional wounds. I am not one to type in the data and forget the person at the end of the day.”

“I work four full days a week, nine hours a day. When I reach Schechter on Thursdays, I come not only to study, but to be re-charged. The faculty and administration transmit a warmth and a worldview that encourages consideration of all beliefs. In this spirit, I return to work on Sunday, better able to listen and to empathize.”

“My mother married at age 12. I am 25, studying for an M.A. in Gender and Jewish Women’s Studies in Jerusalem. Some dreams have been realized...others are still out there, waiting to be fulfilled.”



Rachel Hadad-Serusi

Pedagogic Advisor and Grammar Teacher, Atid Special Needs High School, Ofakim, a development town in the Negev

On the Spectrum

Rachel grew up in Beersheva. She attended the ultra-Orthodox Beis Yaakov high school and teachers' college, and went on to receive a B.A. from the Open University, because "education and an open mind" were values she learned at home. She has single-handedly raised her three children in the same inclusive environment, having tragically lost her husband in a traffic accident some years ago. Her personal loss has not diverted her from a mission to which she is committed. Today she works with marginal youth, mainly from the former Soviet Union, in a special high school which guides them to full matriculation, and a place in the Israeli army.

On Defining Jewish Life and Learning

"I am extremely tied to the Land of Israel, to my people and to Torah. It was not enough to mouth the words 'Am Yisrael' in prayer. I needed to take those words and translate them into action."

"The notion of 'Israeliness' is also important to me. It is filled with an emotional nuance that only we Israelis truly understand. We know that although our lives are finite, our deeds stay on and can continue to make a difference to those around us and to future generations."

"Schechter education measures much more than academic achievement; conferring much more than a degree. It teaches how to live values and how to feel good in a social and community context. My colleagues at Schechter came from such totally different cultural and religious backgrounds, but we were able to forge a common experience through the sources we studied. I felt like I had made a home outside of my home."

Library News



Unique Haggadot Collections Acquired

The Schechter Institute Library now contains one of the largest collections of Haggadot in the State of Israel after acquiring two major collections from Avraham Frank. **The Frank/Lovell Collection**, acquired with the assistance of **Steve and Dedee Lovell**, contains approximately 1200 Haggadot printed between 1670-1960; **The Morris and Beverly Baker Collection of Haggadot** includes approximately 1300 Haggadot printed between 1960-2005. In addition, the library has acquired over 400 liturgical works from **Avraham Frank**. In other acquisitions, the library received two collections of general Judaica donated by **Rabbi Jack Cohen** and by the family of **Rabbi M. David Weiss z"l**.

Monograph Collection Integrated

The library's entire collection has now been integrated into its new computerized management system, enabling the electronic circulation of all books.

Library Cramped for Space

Shortage of space has forced the Schechter Institute to relocate part of the library collection to the building's lower level bomb shelter. This acute shortage will be remedied with the completion of the Classroom Building.

Schechter Commencement Exercises

Fifty students received their M.A. degrees at the ceremony held in Jerusalem on December 9, 2007. Also conferred were the annual **Rifkind-Meresman Fellowships for Academic Excellence** and the **Prof. Alice Shalvi Scholarships**. Since the program was established in 1990, 840 Israelis, mainly educators and rabbis, have received an M.A. degree from Schechter.

The Midrash Project

The Schechter Institute is preparing seven works related to Midrash, including six critical editions. Each critical edition will include the text utilizing the best manuscript, selected variant readings, *mesoret hamidrash* which refers to all rabbinic parallels and a commentary. **Professors David Golinkin** and **Shamma Friedman** serve as the project's general editors with the first three works to be published in 2009: ***Legends of the Jews*** by **Prof. Louis Ginzberg**, second Hebrew edition with new indices by **Rabbis Monique Susskind Goldberg** and **Sara Ben-Moshe**; ***Midrash Shmuel***, edited by **Prof. Berachyahu Lifshitz**; and ***Esther Rabbah***, edited by **Prof. Yosef Tabori** and **Dr. Arnon Atzmon**.

Prizes



Liebhaber Prize

The 11th annual **Rabbi Marc N. and Dr. Henia Liebhaber Prize for Religious Tolerance** was awarded at the Graduation on December 9th 2007, to Member of Knesset, **Rabbi Michael Melchior**, Chair of the Knesset Education Committee. **Rabbi Liebhaber**, presenting the award, spoke about the necessity of nurturing a pluralistic Judaism in Israel.

Kekst Faculty Fellowship

Dr. Shula Laderman, ninth Kekst Fellow (2007-09), is nearing completion of her book, ***God's Blueprint of Creation: A Shared Pictorial Model in Jewish and Christian Art***, which will be published by E.J. Brill in Leiden. A Lecturer in the Graduate School, Laderman has been appointed Assistant Dean of Student Affairs after serving three years as coordinator of the Judaism and the Arts M.A. program.

Academic Conferences



The Schechter Institute sponsored or co-sponsored nine Academic Conferences in 2007-08:

A session of the Hakhel Festival of Jewish Studies at Ramat Efal during Hol Hamoed Sukkot was sponsored by Schechter to launch **Dr. Einat Ramon's** new book ***A New Life: Religion, Motherhood and Supreme Love in the Works of A.D. Gordon*** (Carmel Publishers).

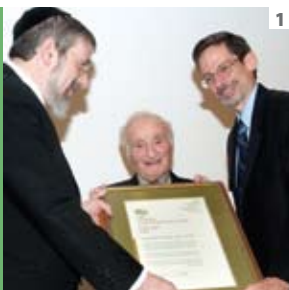
Holocaust Survivors and Israeli Society, a conference organized by Schechter lecturer, **Dr. Galia Glasner-Heled**, was held at Schechter in December 2007.

An evening of study to mark the publication of **Torah Lishma: A Festschrift in Honor of Prof. Shamma Friedman**, was co-sponsored by the Schechter Institute, Bar Ilan University and JTS. Held at the Schocken Institute in December, the event drew 350 people.

The Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem hosted a study evening in January 2008 in honor of the publication of ***Akedat Yitzhak (The Binding of Isaac)***, by Schechter Senior Lecturer, **Dr. Alexander Even-Chen** with Yediot Ahronot Press. 250 people attended.

The Annual Rabbi David Aronson Memorial Symposium, held in March 2008, featured a debate on the subject of Zionism and Post-Zionism with **Dr. Alex Yaakovson** and **Amos Noy**.

The Annual Memorial Study Evening for Prof. Saul Lieberman was held at the Schocken Institute in April 2008.



The Fourth Annual Sarah Becker Frank Conference on Jewish Women's Studies, *Women of Valour: The Military Experience*, took place at the Schechter Institute in May 2008. The conference was organized by Prof. Renée Levine Melammed.

A conference marking the publication of *Jewish Education – For What? and Other Essays*, an anthology of articles by Prof. Walter Ackerman z"l, published by the Schechter Institute with Ben Gurion University, Haifa University and Bar Ilan University, took place at the Schechter Institute in June 2008.

An evening of study at Midreshet Iyun in Tel Aviv honoring the publication of Dr. Einat Ramon's book *A New Life: Religion, Motherhood and Supreme Love in the Works of A.D. Gordon*, was held in June 2008.

Research Institutes

The Center for Judaism and the Arts

The Center for Judaism and the Arts was established in 2001 for the enrichment of educational and cultural life in Israel, and includes the M.A. track in Judaism and the Arts and the Judaism and the Arts Electronic Archive.

Highlights 2007-08

The M.A. track in Judaism and the Arts continues to be a very popular M.A. program with 74 students majoring in the field (and hundreds of students from all study tracks taking elective courses).

Schechter was transformed into an "art venue" with student exhibits and presentations on *Visual Handmade Midrash* as part of an art and theology workshop taught by Dr. Jo Milgrom.

"Judaism and the Arts" Electronic Archive

The "Judaism and the Arts" Website, an electronic archive of 4,000 works of art donated by Schechter faculty member Dr. Jo Milgrom, will provide an extraordinary resource tool integrating the arts and Judaism for educators, academics, rabbis and students in Israel and around the world. All art pieces will include basic information on the artist, the work of art and date of completion and a search engine by artist, theme and time period. The website will feature topical essays in Hebrew and English, employing art in the interpretation of Biblical stories. Dr. Jo Milgrom and Dr. Joel Duman have contributed the first twenty essays on *The Teaching of Bible with Art as Commentary*, which draw upon 500 artworks that have been uploaded to the site. The first stage of the archive will be online by the end of 2008.

"Seeing the Voices" Website Makes Its Debut

"Seeing the Voices," a project of Schechter's Center for Judaism and the Arts and the TALI Education Fund, is a web resource developed by a team of artists and educators that employs art and music for teaching the Book of Exodus. The site is used by junior high school pupils and teachers, and is accessed through Israel's educational website, *Snunit*. In 2008-09, TEF will conduct training workshops for TALI pedagogic counselors on utilizing the website.

The Center for Women in Jewish Law

The Center for Women in Jewish Law, established in 1999, is devoted to researching, publishing and educating the public on the rights of women from the perspective of Jewish Law. The Center, through its seven Hebrew-English issues of *Jewish Law Watch*, and its magnum opus *Za'akat Dalot (The Cry of the Wretched): Halakhic Solutions for the Agunot of our Time*, has advanced Jewish legal advocacy research in the area of *agunot* (women whose husbands refuse them a writ of divorce and whose cases have dragged on in Israeli rabbinic courts).

A popular series of booklets, *To Learn and To Teach*, presents an array of contemporary issues related to the Role of Women in Jewish Life. Distributed to targeted populations throughout the world in five languages, each booklet is devoted to a specific topic on the status of women in Jewish Law.

Publications 2007-08

Taking the Plunge: A Practical and Spiritual Guide to the Mikveh, Rabbi Miriam Berkowitz, Jerusalem: Schechter Institute, 2007

To Learn and To Teach #5: The Separation of Menstruants from Prayer and the Synagogue, January 2008, published simultaneously in Hebrew, English, French, Spanish and Russian

In preparation

To Learn and To Teach #6: The Halakhic Parameters of the Ketubah, 2009

Ask the Rabbi: Answers to 100 Online Questions on Judaism, 2009

All Center publications are available for purchase online at: www.schechter.edu. Most can be downloaded for viewing at www.ResponsaForToday.com.



1. Left: MK Rabbi Michael Melchior receives Liebhaber Prize from Rabbi Marc Liebhaber and Prof. David Golinkin 2. Graduates of the Interdisciplinary Jewish Studies M.A. program at Schechter Commencement Exercises, December 2007 3. Levana Milon, Rifkind-Meresman Scholarship recipient, is congratulated by (left) Jac Friedgut and Dr. Guy Miron 4. Graduates of the Judaism and the Arts M.A. program with Kekst Fellow Dr. Shula Laderman (right) 5. Brigadier General Yehudit Grisaro at the Sarah Becker Frank Conference on *Women of Valour: The Military Experience* 6. Dr. Jo Milgrom (second from right) attends student art exhibition from her "Handmade Midrash" class



Outreach and Advocacy 2007-08

Rabbis Diana Villa and Monique Susskind Goldberg, senior researchers at the Center, represent the Center on public committees and advocacy groups in Israel and overseas. Rabbi Diana Villa continued to serve as chairperson of the Halakhah committee for ICAR (International Coalition for Agunah Rights) in 2007-08. She holds the position of Vice President for Religious Affairs of the Rabbinical Assembly-Israel, thus influencing policy on marriages and conversion. She is also a board member of the Joint Institute for Conversion, a pluralistic body comprised of Conservative, Reform and Orthodox representatives that teaches candidates for conversion.

Sourcebook on the Agunah Problem

ICAR called upon Rabbi Villa to compile a sourcebook and course outline on the agunah problem and its solutions, which are posted on the ICAR website. This important document was distributed throughout Israel for study to coincide with International Agunah Day in March 2008.

"Ask the Rabbi" Answers a Need

In their "Ask the Rabbi" page of the Schechter website, Rabbis Villa and Goldberg reply to on-line questions, which has resulted in the writing of 500 responsa. Popular responsa are published monthly on the site. An *Ask the Rabbi* book containing 100 selected questions and answers on Judaism will be published in 2009.

German Rabbis Gain Insight on Agunot

Rabbi Monique Susskind-Goldberg lectured on *Hafkaat Kiddushin* (a legal device for freeing Agunot) to a group of German Reform Rabbis who visited Schechter in January 2008.

Study Day for Prenuptial Agreements

Rabbi Diana Villa, in partnership with Yalta, (the organization of women rabbis and rabbinical students) conducted a Study Day on Prenuptial Agreements for Masorti Rabbis in October 2007.

Lectures to Jewish Agency MASA Participants

Rabbi Diana Villa spoke at two MASA Seminars (Jewish Agency) for young Diaspora adults studying in Israel. She joined a panel on "Religious Streams in Judaism" in Jerusalem in December 2007 and spoke on "Israel-Diaspora Relations" in Tel Aviv in March 2008.

Sharing Jewish Knowledge Overseas

Rabbi Diana Villa taught two courses at the Seminario Rabínico Latinoamericano and Teachers' College in Buenos Aires during the summer of 2008. She also conducted study sessions with local rabbis. In Uruguay and Chile, she lectured on agunot and on the conversion crisis to the local Jewish communities.

Rabbi Monique Susskind Goldberg taught classes on "Charity and Justice in Jewish Law" in the Brussels Jewish Community Center in September 2008.

The Institute of Applied Halakhah

The Institute of Applied Halakhah, which makes Jewish Law accessible to modern Jewish households around the world, is celebrating a decade of advocacy work. Established in 1997 in order to publish a library of Halakhic literature in Hebrew, English and Russian, the Institute has published 22 volumes of scholarly research through **The Meyer and Tirzah Goldstein Holocaust Memorial Library**, **The Rabbi Israel Levinthal Center for Contemporary Responsa** and in partnership with **The Center for Women in Jewish Law**.

Publications in 2007-08

Torah Lishma: A Festschrift in Honor of Prof. Shamma Friedman, co-published by the Schechter Institute, Bar Ilan University and Jewish Theological Seminary, December 2007

Kuntress Hateshuvot Hehadash, Vol. 2, Prof. Shmuel Glick, the second volume of a new bibliography of the Responsa literature, co-published with the Bar Ilan Law Faculty and the Schocken Institute, September 2007

Taking the Plunge: A Practical and Spiritual Guide to the Mikveh, Miriam Berkowitz, Jerusalem, 2007

Books scheduled for publication in 2008-09

Perspectives on Jewish Law and Contemporary Issues, by Rabbi Wayne Allen

Kuntress Hateshuvot Hehadash, Vol. 3, Prof. Shmuel Glick, the third volume of a new bibliography of the Responsa literature, co-published with the Bar Ilan Law Faculty and the Schocken Institute, Fall 2008 (Hebrew)

Kashrut: A Guide to its Observance and its Meaning for Our Time, Samuel Dresner and David Golinkin (Hebrew)

Responsa of the Va'ad Halakhah of the Rabbinical Assembly of Israel, Volume 7 (Hebrew), David Golinkin, ed.

Halakhot Olam: Responsa on Contemporary Halakhic Problems by Rabbi Hayyim Hirschenson, Yossi Turner, ed., (Hebrew)

Malki Bakodesh, Volume 2, by Rabbi Hayyim Hirschenson, David Zohar, ed., second edition (Hebrew)



1. Prof. David Halivni (left) addressing a Schechter faculty symposium honoring the Israeli Prize winner 2. Students from JTS's Davidson School of Education visit Schechter 3. Students of Dr. Steve Copeland's class on *Yanush Korchak: Educating Toward Idealism*