The Hanoch Albeck Fellowships in Jewish Studies

Professor Adam Afterman, Chair of the Tel Aviv University Department of Jewish Studies and Talmud, is proud to announce the founding of the "Hanoch Albeck Fellowships in Jewish Studies."

The Department of Jewish Philosophy and Talmud at Tel Aviv University stands at the cutting edge of the study of Jewish philosophy in Israel and abroad. Its faculty members study and teach a broad range of fields: Talmud and rabbinic literature; Maimonides and medieval Jewish philosophy; Jewish mysticism and Kabbalah; and modern Jewish philosophy, Hasidism, and Zionism. Above and beyond its scholarly pursuits, the department is fueled by a strong sense of commitment to the character of Jewish life in and outside Israel. Alongside future generations of scholars and Jewish philosophers, teachers of Jewish culture and thought receive their training in this department.

It is our belief that the fruits of generations of Jewish thought have the ability to make an essential contribution to the ongoing internal discourse regarding the identity and goals of Israeli society. In our eyes, as a representative of the vibrant, youthful, variegated face of Israeli society, Tel Aviv is the appropriate venue for this discourse, which should moreover be the capstone of Israel’s largest university. Our Jewish tradition must be approached with passion, but also with strict intellectual integrity and openness to developing trends in international research methodology and scholarship in these and other disciplines.

Hanoch Albeck (1890-1972) was a living embodiment of the synthesis of intellectual integrity and love of Jewish learning. As one of the founders of modern talmudic research, his groundbreaking studies in
German and Hebrew delved into all realms of the “sea of the Talmud”: early halakhah, Mishnah, Tosefta, Talmud, Midrash, and medieval talmudic commentary. Using rigorous scholarship, Albeck forged new paths in these fields, stubbornly defending his conclusions even if they opposed the scholarly consensus. On the other hand, he successfully conveyed his unconditional love of Torah to his many students, among them the eminent Jewish philosopher Abraham Joshua Heschel. At present, Albeck’s studies form the backbone of talmudic scholarship.

In line with his heritage, the Hanoch Albeck Fellowships in Jewish Studies will provide financial support for students in the Department of Jewish Philosophy and Talmud at Tel Aviv University and funding for the department’s innovative scholarship. The foundation aims both to grant fellowships to students and educators and to provide financial support for international conferences and workshops on Jewish philosophy and for cooperative endeavors by the department with leading European and American universities. Another aim is to underwrite the costs of publishing the scholarly journal Te’uda, dedicated to the study of Talmud and Jewish philosophy.