TITLE OF PROJECT: A Feminist Commentary on the Babylonian Talmud: Tractate Arakhin
(Undergraduate / Graduate Student Project)

PROJECT INFORMATION
Rabbi Jane Kanarek is a professor of rabbinics at Hebrew College where she teaches Talmud, Midrash and Jewish law at the Rabbinical School. She is currently part of a large, multi-year, international project to write a feminist commentary on the entire Babylonian Talmud. As part of this work, Rabbi Kanarek aims to write a feminist commentary on one particular tractate, Arakhin.

Arakhin refers to a set of laws in the book of Leviticus that prescribe ways in which people can dedicate the monetary equivalent of their own worth and that of their property to the desert Tabernacle. In its rabbinic form, it becomes a way that people can dedicate that money to the Jerusalem Temple. As a set of laws about Temple dedication and monetary worth, Arakhin becomes a significant location through which the Talmud considers relative human worth and gender. Through writing a commentary, Rabbi Kanarek will explore the following questions: What does it mean to write a feminist commentary? How does reading the Talmud with a feminist lens change interpretations of passages? How can a feminist commentary find more voices of women within the Talmud? How and when is Arakhin particularly associated with women? Does that continue beyond the rabbinic period? What are the specific lenses from feminist theory that Rabbi Kanarek would want to choose as focal points for this tractate and as guides to choosing sugyot for commentary?

Rabbi Kanarek is looking for an intern to assist with the research for this project. The work will entail collecting articles on gender and Jewish studies and/or gender and antiquity, locating secondary articles that investigate the topic of Arakhin, creating a bibliography and PDF files of this material, and reading selections from volumes in the Feminist Commentary project. The intern’s time will likely be divided between library research (50%), internet research (30%), and discussion with Rabbi Kanarek (20%).

PROFILE OF APPROPRIATE CANDIDATE
- An interest in studying classical Jewish texts and a willingness to think sophisticatedly about rabbinic literature; experience working with rabbinic literature (preferred)
- Ability to think critically about the study of gender
- Knowledge of Hebrew - preferred
- Excellent research skills including library and online; confidence to work with reference librarians
- Excellent writing skills and note taking; strong attention to detail
- Strong organizational skills; ability to organize findings
- Independent worker; self-reliant