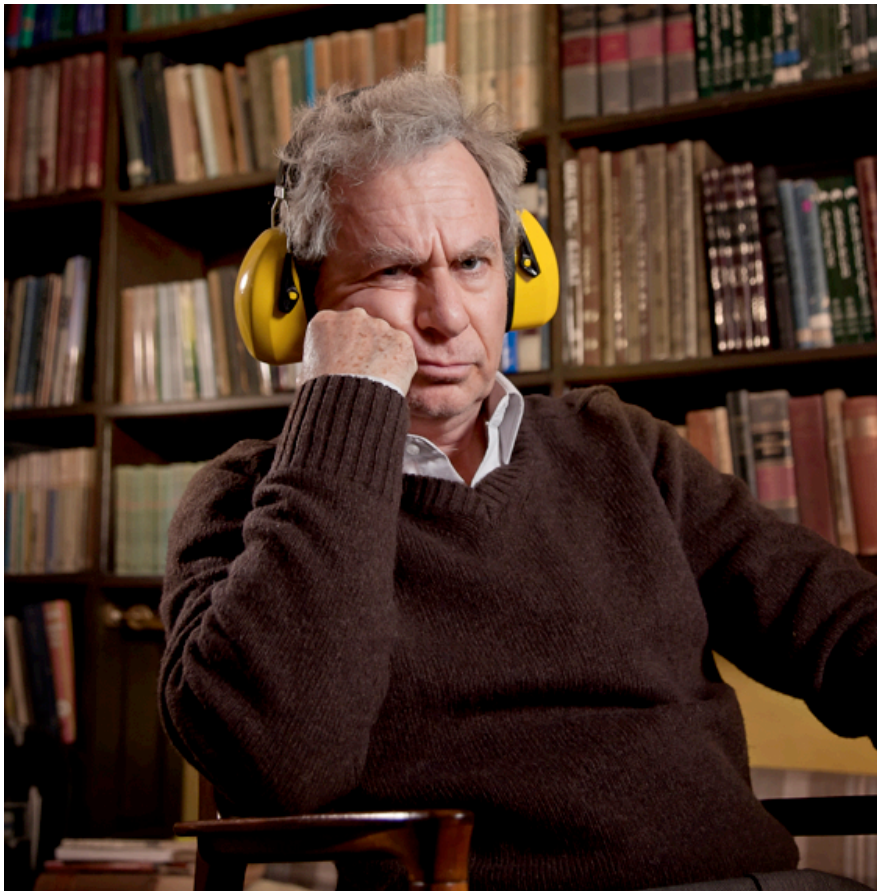


OFFICIAL SELECTION
COMPETITION
FESTIVAL DE CANNES

WESTEND FILMS, UNITED KING FILMS & MOVIE PLUS
PRESENT

FOOTNOTE



A film by Joseph CEDAR

Starring
Shlomo BAR ABA & Lior ASHKENAZI

Israel-1h45-35 mm-Scope-Dolby SRD-2011

International Press:

LE PUBLIC SYSTEME CINEMA

Céline PETIT & Clément REBILLAT

In Paris: 40, rue Anatole France - 92594 Levallois-Perret cedex

Phone: +33 (0)1 41 34 23 50/21 26

In Cannes: 13, rue d'Antibes - 4th floor - 06400 Cannes

Phone: +33 (0)4 97 06 08 33/31 82

Fax : +33(0)4 93 68 14 05

cpetit@lepublicsystemecinema.fr/crebillat@lepublicsystemecinema.fr

www.lepublicsystemecinema.fr

International Sales:

WESTEND FILMS

In London: 15 Greek Street

2nd Floor-London, W1D 4DP-UK

Ph: +44 (0) 207 494 8300

Fax: +44 (0) 207 494 8301

www.westendfilms.com

In Cannes : Résidence du Gray d'Albion

28bis, rue des Serbes

Entrance C, 1st floor

Phone: +33 (0)4 93 68 09 28

SYNOPSIS

Footnote is the story of a great rivalry between a father and son. Both eccentric professors, they have dedicated their lives to their work. The father seems a stubborn purist who fears the establishment. His son, Uriel, appears to strive on accolades, endlessly seeking recognition.

But one day, the tables turn. The two men switch places when the father learns he is to be awarded the most valuable honor one can receive. His desperate need for recognition is betrayed, his vanity exposed. Uriel is torn between pride and envy. Will he sabotage his father's glory?

Footnote is the story of insane competition, the admiration and envy for a role model, bringing father and son to a final, bitter confrontation.

Talmudic Studies

The Talmudic literature is the name of a compilation of Jewish texts that were written in Palestine and in Babylon circa 200-500 AD. This prolific literature, written in Hebrew and Aramaic, includes some of the Jewish people's masterpieces, including the Babylonian Talmud (the Gemara), the Mishnah (the first written compendium of Judaism's Oral Law), the biblical exegeses and more. It was written during a major political-cultural crossroads in the history of the Jewish people, the turning point following the destruction of the Temple and loss of political independence and the metamorphosis that this culture underwent when it became a subjugated, often oppressed minority, in the Diaspora. Undoubtedly these texts, considered sacred, were at the center of the Jewish people's cultural and intellectual enterprising during their entire period of exile, and they are strewn with the cultural and sociological seeds that will generate the developments and challenges throughout this era, an era that lasted over 1500 years after they were written.

The Talmudic texts were edited and conveyed orally. They were subsequently written down and copied in manuscripts for hundreds of years, until finally they were printed during the printing revolution in the 15th and 16th centuries.

'Talmudic Studies' is a name for the attempt to approach these texts with an objective scrutinizing eye, while applying diverse academic tools of critique. This approach began in German universities in the 19th century, as part of an overall trend known as 'Judaic Studies', and continues to this day in many universities worldwide. The study attempts to research the historical background of these texts, the daily reality they reflect, their linguistic and cultural characteristics, the literary sources, their editing process and much more. In addition, the study focuses on recreating these texts – recreation of the original texts that were found and a general attempt to recreate texts that were lost.

One of the issues that makes Talmudic Studies a volatile area, even controversial to some extent, is the academic-analytical approach to traditional texts that many consider 'sacred'. The basic skepticism as to the reliability of the text, the interweaving of the text in the greater picture of ideological struggles and historic developments, the exposure of the many voices that can be heard from within the text and its editing trends – all these clash head on with the traditional assumptions that underlined the study of these texts for hundreds of years, and therefore provoke vast emotions among today's traditional society as well.

The Talmud Department at the Hebrew University – The Jerusalem School

The Talmud Department was one of the first of eight departments that were set up when the Hebrew University was established in 1928, and still exists to this day. Among the lecturers who taught in the department we find such giants as Saul Liberman, E.S. Rosenthal, E.E. Urbach, Israel Ta-Shma and more, known to all individuals who take an interest in the study of the Talmud. **The founder of the department, Prof. Yaacov Nachum Epstein, a legendary Talmud researcher with degrees from German universities and once a student of East European yeshivas, solidified the nature of the department that characterizes it to this day.**

In light of Epstein's studies, the Jerusalem school focuses on the bland textual reconstruction of the Talmudic texts and their wording during the preliminary research stages. The winding and unwinding of these long scrolls of ancient texts over the years resulted in many mistakes and errors, which raise doubt as to the authenticity of the text that we obtained. Therefore, before any researcher can ask himself questions that pertain to the content of the text, the concepts conveyed therein, the literary design or the history reflected therein, he must do his best to reconstruct the original text after it was obtained through dubious channels and after hundreds of years.

This nondescript textual study, known as 'philology', requires extreme diligence. The researcher must collect photographs of the existing manuscripts of the text, some hidden away in libraries and basements around the world, and conduct a meticulous comparison of each and every word. This is painstaking work, rummaging around lost archives to find one more manuscript that will shed light on a baffling sentence in a forgotten text. Endless searching and documentation of small errors made by the Jewish book copier in the Middle Ages, in frozen Europe or remote Yemen, who lost focus for a split second.

The extent of familiarity of the Jerusalem school researchers with the texts is more profound than anyone else's. They are driven by an uncompromising loyalty to the original text. They view their pedantic study as the cornerstone for all the future towers that will be built in terms of these texts, though their endeavours are not afforded the recognition it deserves and is considered pointless, technical work.

This style is not very popular and the Talmud department attracts very few students as opposed to other departments. And among these students, some are forced to leave due to the high scholastic demands and the taxing nature of the work and studies. Nonetheless, many renowned researchers in diverse fields of Judaic studies included this department on their academic route and its academic standards are highly acclaimed in the field of Judaic studies the world over.

The critics of the Jerusalem school claim the exaggerated adherence to details prevents a view of the overall picture, and its members are an exclusive and arrogant clique that has lost its relevance.

The Israel Prize

The Israel Prize is a prestigious award that the State of Israel has been handing out since 1953 to outstanding citizens in the following four main areas: (a) the humanities, social sciences, and Jewish studies, (b) the natural and exact sciences, (c) culture and arts and (d) lifetime achievement and exceptional contribution to the nation. Each main area is divided into subfields, changing from year to year in a perennial cycle. The Minister of Education is in charge of selecting the prize recipients, but in fact selection is made by a public committee of judges, comprised of experts in the specific field in which the prize is being awarded that year. The committee must find a candidate it agrees upon unanimously and the Minister generally approves its recommendation. The names of the winners, along with the names of the judges on the committee and the committee's reasons for their selection, are published officially several months before the award ceremony and are kept confidential until the official announcement. The prize itself is granted every year in a state ceremony on Independence Day, and is attended by the Heads of State.

Every Israeli citizen, including the committee members, can recommend a candidate for the Israel Prize until committee discussions begin. An individual cannot suggest himself. The identity of the recommending individual remains confidential and is not made public even after the prize is awarded the winner.

Subfields in the area of Jewish studies include: Jewish thought, Talmud, History, Bible, Literature, Philosophy and Archaeology. Prize winners in these subfields include: Prof. Gershom Shalom, Prof. Saul Lieberman, Supreme Justice Menachem Elon, Prof. Yaacov Katz, Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, Prof. Moshe Bar Asher and Prof. Avi Ravitzky. Contrary to the winners in the area of 'natural and exact sciences', in Jewish studies it is often difficult to distinguish between 'pure science' and non-scientific 'cultural/religious activities', and this indistinction has often been at the center of controversy when it came to the identity of some of the prize recipients in these categories.

The Prize also includes a monetary award in the amount of NIS 75,000, however its reputation is based on its prestige and public recognition. During the 57 years in which the Prize has been awarded, several winners refused to accept it, each for his own reasons and in his own style. Most famous among them was David Ben Gurion, who claimed he doesn't need the Prize for performing his duty to the nation, Prof. Yeshayahu Leibowitz, who turned it down due to the political controversy surrounding his nomination, and Uri Zohar, who declined as an act of defiance against the establishment. The first individual to turn down the award, as early as 1957, was Prof. Hanoch Albeck, a professor of Talmud at the Hebrew University who objected to the award in principle. In the case of refusal, the award is canceled in the area in question that year and is not awarded to an alternative candidate.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH JOSEPH CEDAR

- Where does the idea of "Footnote" come from?

It is difficult for me to answer that question without spoiling the film and giving away a key plot point, because the initial idea this time was exactly that – a plot point that I thought would be interesting to develop. It is remotely based on something that almost happened to me, and I enjoyed imagining how it would unfold if it did happen to me. The finished film, however, turned out to be much more complex than that initial idea. During the writing process the focus shifted from the plot to an examination of these two characters.

- You have used different tools of the comedy genre (burlesque scenes, visual/editing choices, situation comedy...) that could qualify the film as an "intellectual comedy", would you agree with this?

I like that the film may be considered a comedy, because it tells the audience that they can feel comfortable to laugh and smile and not necessarily take everything too seriously. But if we want to be formalists, strictly speaking, I think this story qualifies as a tragedy. As most Father-son stories do.

- The film is a portrait of 2 generations: fathers and sons. It's both a universal issue and a great part of Israeli culture. Which one did you intend to talk about?

I've been thinking about this tension between the universal and the culturally specific for some time. While I'm still not sure I know if a perfect balance can exist, because one does come at the expense of the other, I find that my own natural tendency is to work with extremely culturally specific material, and hope that people outside of my close circle will somehow recognize the human motivations. This question also helps me articulate my feelings towards films I see, or books I read. When a story is too "universal," I am either suspicious of it, or bored by it.

- Why did you choose Talmud researchers?

The Talmud department at the Hebrew University is a remarkable place. It is the smallest department in the university, but it is famous worldwide for its uncompromising methods, and its unforgiving attitude toward the notion of 'mistake.' Once I started hearing stories from within this department, about mythological rivalries between scholars, stubbornness on an epic scale, eccentric professors who live with an academic mission that is bigger than life itself, even if its topic is radically esoteric, I fell in love with them all, and they became the centre of this story.

- The rivalry between the father and his son in your movie implies the sons' sacrifice but maybe also the fathers' sacrifice?

I would rather not try to interpret these themes in the film, but I believe the word 'sacrifice' can be very useful when discussing the nature of the father – son relationship.

- Can you talk about the end of your movie?

The last 15 minutes of the film were treated more as a dance sequence than a dramatic scene. They were choreographed more than they were directed. The emotions seemed too big, too contradicting, too terrifying to put into dialogue or into simple realistic human encounters. The result is a subjective point of view of an event that from the outside seems festive and harmless, but from these characters' perspective, from within their inner world, it is nothing less than apocalyptic.

- It's a movie about men. The women are in the shadow. Is there something to understand here?

I will argue that the mother character, Yehudit, is a catalyst for the entire story and is very much in the dramatic spotlight of the film. But it is true that this film is about two men, and in the service of dramatic focus, it is their perspective that is investigated in the film.

- Can you comment on the title? And the importance of this footnote?

One Talmud researcher, who is known to be very sparse and dry in his writing, once explained to me his use of a footnote like this: "it is a piece of information, sometimes an anecdote, that is not necessarily verifiable, sometimes even outrageous, or silly, often only remotely relevant to the main text, but at the same time it is just too irresistible and juicy to leave out entirely... "

That is pretty much how I feel about this film. It's a footnote.

JOSEPH CEDAR

Born in New York, Joseph Cedar immigrated to Israel with his family at the age of six. Cedar studied philosophy and theatre history at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and is an NYU Film School graduate. He currently lives in Tel-Aviv with his wife and three children.

His first two feature films, *TIME OF FAVOR (HAHESDER – 2001)* and *CAMPFIRE (MEDURAT HASHEVET – 2004)* were chosen to be Israel's official selections for the Foreign Language category at the Oscars. Both films were box-office hits in Israel and were distributed theatrically in North America and Europe. *CAMPFIRE* had its world premiere at the Berlin Int. Film Festival 2004.

Cedar received the Silver Bear award for best director for his third film, *BEAUFORT*, which premiered in the main competition at the Berlin Int. Film Festival 2007. *BEAUFORT* became the top grossing film in the Israeli box-office that year and was later nominated for an Academy Award in the Best Foreign Language Film category 2008.

FOOTNOTE (Hearat Shulayim), is Cedar's fourth feature film.

FILMOGRAPHY

2011 FOOTNOTE (Hearat Shulayim)

2007 BEAUFORT

2004 CAMPFIRE (Medurat Hashevet)

2001 TIME OF FAVOR (Hahesder)

SHLOMO BAR ABA

FILMOGRAPHY

2011 FOOTNOTE (Hearat Shulayim)

SELECTED PLAYS

GOOD SOLDIER SVEJK by Jaroslav Hasek

THE SUNSHINE BOYS by Neil Simon

THE PRODUCERS by Mel Brooks

WAITING FOR GODOT by Samuel Beckett

LIOR ASHKENAZI

PARTIAL FILMOGRAPHY

2011 FOOTNOTE (Hearat Shulayim)

2009 ULTIMATUM by Alain Tasma

2008 HELLO GOODBYE by Graham Guit

2007 THE BUBBLE by Eytan Fox

2005 WALK ON WATER by Eytan Fox

2005 MATANA MISHAMAYIM by Dover Koshashvili

2001 LATE MARRIAGE (Hatuna Meuheret) by Dover Koshashvili

CREDITS

Shlomo Bar Aba
Lior Ashkenazi
Alisa Rosen
Alma Zak
Daniel Markovich
Micah Lewesohn
Yuval Scharf
Nevo Kimchi

Eliezer Shkolnik
Uriel Shkolnik
Yehudit Shkolnik
Dikla Shkolnik
Josh Shkolnik
Yehuda Grossman
Noa - Newspaper Reporter
Yair Fingerhut

Director & screenwriter
Cinematography
Editing
Sound designer
Sound mixing
Composer
1st director assistant
Casting
Costumes
Make-up
Production designer
Creative designer
Line producer
Executive producer
Producers

Joseph Cedar
Yaron Scharf
Einat Glaser Zarhin
Alex Claude
Tully Chen
Amit Poznansky
Shir Shoshani
Hila Yuval
Laura Sheim
Ronit Dugo Arviv
Arad Sawat
Michal Wolff
Tamir Kfir
Michal Graidy (Movie Plus)
David Mandil, Moshe Edery, Leon Edery

A United King Films & Movie Plus production.

With the support of Israel Film Fund, Jerusalem Film and Television Fund, Avi Chai Foundation.

