

## SAM BERRIN SHONKOFF

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**CURRENT POSITION:** Visiting Assistant Professor of Religion and Jewish Studies, Oberlin College

### **EDUCATION**

**University of Chicago**, Doctor of Philosophy, with distinction, Aug 2018

- History of Judaism program at the Divinity School
- Dissertation: “Sacramental Existence: Embodiment in Martin Buber’s Philosophical and Hasidic Writings”
- Committee: Paul Mendes-Flohr (advisor), Michael Fishbane, Shaul Magid
- Exam fields: Rabbinic Thought and Theology in Late Antiquity (Michael Fishbane); Medieval Jewish Philosophy and Theology (James Robinson); Modern Jewish Thought (Paul Mendes-Flohr); Continental Philosophy of Religion in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century (Jean-Luc Marion).

**University of Toronto**, Master of Arts, July 2011

- Department for the Study of Religion and Centre for Jewish Studies
- Advisor: David Novak
- Tikvah Fellow
- Thesis: “Self-Contradictions: How Discordances Between Genesis 1 and 2 Resonate for Contemporary Jewish Exegetes”

**Brown University**, Bachelor of Arts, May 2007

- Concentration: Religious Studies
- *Magna cum laude* honors

**Hebrew University**, Rothberg International School, Jerusalem, Winter – Spring 2008

- Visiting graduate student

**The Conservative Yeshiva**, Jerusalem, Fall 2007 and Summer 2009

- Legacy Heritage Fellow (2009)

**Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies**, Jerusalem, Summer 2006

### **SELECTED PUBLICATIONS**

#### EDITED WORKS:

*Hasidic Thought* (working title), volume in *The Brandeis Library of Modern Jewish Thought* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, forthcoming), co-edited with Ariel Evan Mayse.

*Martin Buber: His Intellectual and Scholarly Legacy* (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

*The Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 25.1 (2017), special issue on Martin Buber, co-edited with Paul Mendes-Flohr.

BOOK CHAPTERS:

“Martin Buber,” in *A New Hasidism: Roots*, edited by Arthur Green and Ariel Evan Mayse (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society and University of Nebraska Press, forthcoming 2019).

“*Shamor* and *Zakhor* after Charlottesville,” in *V’shamru*, edited by Martin S. Cohen (New York: New Paradigm Matrix, forthcoming 2018).

“Sacramental Existence and Embodied Theology in Buber’s Representation of Hasidism,” in *Martin Buber: His Intellectual and Scholarly Legacy*, edited by Sam Berrin Shonkoff (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

“Michael Fishbane: An Intellectual Portrait,” in *Michael Fishbane: Jewish Hermeneutical Theology*, Library of Contemporary Jewish Philosophers, edited by Aaron W. Hughes and Hava Tirosh-Samuelson (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 1-52.

“Temples on Fire: Desert, Dust, and Destruction,” in *Playa Dust: Collected Stories from Burning Man*, edited by Samantha Krukowski (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2014), 176-183.

ARTICLES:

“In Her Love You Will Always Err’: Visions of Religious Praxis in Buber’s Hasidic Tales,” translated into Japanese by Dr. Fumio Ono, *Journal of the Kyoto Association of Jewish Thought* (forthcoming 2018).

(With Paul Mendes-Flohr) “Preface,” special issue on Martin Buber, *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 25.1 (2017): 1-3.

“Sacramental Existence and Embodied Theology in Buber’s Representation of Hasidism,” *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 25.1 (2017): 131-161.

Article on “Jeremiah (Book and Person): Modern Judaism,” in *The Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016).

“Internet Searchers, God Seekers, and Longing for the Unmediated,” *Symposia* 6, University of Toronto Department for the Study of Religion (2014): 20-33.

“Bodily Immediacy and the Body Politic in Buber’s Social Thought,” in “*Theocracy*” and “*Nation*” in *Jewish Thought: Past and Present*, ed. Ada Taggar-Cohen (Kyoto: Doshisha University, 2014), 53-66.

“The Two Tablets: On Dissolving Ethical-Theological Dualism in Sacred Attunement,” *The Journal of Religion* 93. 4 (2013): 434-451.

“Viewing the World with Clear-Sighted Uncertainty,” *Sb’ma: A Journal of Jewish Ideas* (May 2013).

“The Narrow Plank: Rosenzweig and Kierkegaard On the Possibility of Romantic Love,” *The University of Toronto Journal for Jewish Thought*, vol. 3 (2012): 1-30.

“Wholeness and the Holy Land: On Buber’s Insistence that Zionists Ought to Turn to Hasidism and Not Herzl,” *Glossolalia* 4.2, Yale Divinity School (2012): 1-10.

“We Shall Do and We Shall Understand: Halakhah, Habitus and Embodied Theology in Judaism,” *Journal of Religion and Culture*, vol. 23, Concordia University (2012): 15-37.

“Self-Contradictions: How Discordances Between Genesis 1 and 2 Resonate for Contemporary Jewish Exegetes,” *Glossolalia* 4.1, Yale Divinity School (2011).

“The Rabbinate?” *Sb’ma: A Journal of Jewish Ideas* 39.658 (2009): 1-4.

*Dvar Tzedeck* essays, American Jewish World Service, 2008-2009  
(<https://ajws.org/author/sam-berrin-shonkoff/>): Lech Lecha; Vayetze; Shmot; Yitro; Vayakhel-Pekudei; Acharei Mot-Kedoshim; Beha’alotcha; Matot-Masei; Shoftim.

“Divine Intercourse: Sexuality as Metaphor and Symbol in Medieval Kabbalah,” *Ziggurat: Brown Journal of Religion* 3.2 (2008): 42-70.

“Dimensions of Holiness,” *Sb’ma: A Journal of Jewish Ideas* 38.643 (2007): 11.

“Out of this World?: On Maimonides’s Interpretation of Job,” *Ziggurat: Brown Journal of Religion* 2.2 (2007): 39-43.

“Contemplative Judaism,” *Ziggurat: Brown Journal of Religion* 2.1 (2006): 25-36.

#### BOOK REVIEWS:

Elias Sacks, *Moses Mendelssohn’s Living Script: Philosophy, Practice, History, Judaism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017). Reviewed in *The Journal of Religion* 98.2 (2018): 298-299.

Michael Fishbane, *Sacred Attunement: A Jewish Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008). Reviewed in *The University of Toronto Journal for Jewish Thought* 2 (2011).

#### PRESENTATIONS

“The Orality of Silence: Mendel of Vurke’s Wordless Torah, Textualized,” Association for Jewish Studies (AJS) 50th Annual Conference (Dec 2018).

“From the Frankfurt Lehrhaus to Havurat Shalom: Fellowship, Renewal, Counterculture,” Shneer Fellowship lecture, University of Colorado Boulder (Mar 2019).

“Standing in the Doorway: Hermeneutics and Resistance in Buber’s Hasidic tales,” A German-Jewish Hermeneutics, a workshop at Northwestern University (Oct 2018).

“‘We Shall Do and We Shall Understand’: The Hermeneutical Afterlives of a Verse and the Birth of Embodied Theology,” Luckens Prize Lecture, University of Kentucky (Mar 2018).

“Holy Deeds: Martin Buber’s Hasidic Tales as Performative Liturgy,” Association for Jewish Studies (AJS) 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference (Dec 2017).

“Corporeality, Not Spirituality’: Martin Buber’s Resistance at Eranos in 1934,” American Academy of Religion (AAR) Annual Meeting (Nov 2017).

“In Your Love of Her You Will Always Err’: Visions of Religious Praxis in Buber’s Hasidic Tales,” Association for Jewish Studies (AJS) 48<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference (Dec 2016)

Moderator for “Open Forum with Featured Philosophers” session at “The Future of Jewish Philosophy: International Conference to Celebrate the Library of Contemporary Jewish Philosophers,” Arizona State University (Sept 2016)

“Sacramental Existence and Embodied Theology in Buber’s Representation of Hasidism,” joint session of the Theology & Religious Ethics Workshop and Jewish Studies Workshop (May 2016).

Introductory reflections at “Celebrating the Work of Michael Fishbane: Discussion and Book Launch,” Seminary Co-op Bookstore, Chicago, IL (Apr 2016).

“From Every Limb: Language, Embodiment and Historiography in Buber’s Interpretation of Hasidism,” Association for Jewish Studies (AJS) 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference (Dec 2015).

“Sacramental Existence and Religious Truth in Buber’s Representation of Hasidism,” Martin Buber: Philosopher of Dialogue, a conference in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of Buber’s death, University of Chicago (Oct 2015).

“Buber’s Biblical Humanism as Critique of Political Zionism,” Multiple Dialogues: Martin Buber in Palestine/Israel, a joint conference of the Leo Baeck Institute of Jerusalem, the Martin Buber Society of Fellows at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and Goethe University of Frankfurt am Main, in Jerusalem (May 2015).

“Martin Buber 101,” joint session of the Jewish Studies Workshop and the Divinity Students Association at the University of Chicago (Jan 2015).

“From Every Limb’: Language, Embodiment, and Historiography in Buber’s Interpretation of Hasidism,” History of the Religions: Part II, Columbia University (Mar 2014).

“Bodily Immediacy and the Body Politic in Buber’s Social Thought,” Theocracy and Nation in Jewish Thought: Past and Present, Hebrew University, Jerusalem (Dec 2013).

“The 49-Day Path to Revelation, or Counting Sheaves of Barley” JewishU, University of Chicago (May 2013).

“Martin Buber’s Concept of Revelation,” Congregation Rodfei Zedek with KAM Isaiah Israel Congregation, Chicago (May 2013).

“Unmediated Bodies: Buber’s Pursuit of the *Unmittelbar* and His Turn to Embodiment,” Philosophy of Religions Workshop, University of Chicago (Apr 2013).

“Internet Searchers, God Seekers, and Longing for the Unmediated,” conference on Media Fever! Religion as Mediation, University of Toronto (Apr 2013).

“We Shall Do and We Shall Understand: Halakhah, Habitus and Embodied Theology in Judaism,” conference on Ways of Knowing, Harvard University (Oct 2012).

“Spiritual Meaning of ‘Dust’ and ‘Desert’ in Judaism,” Sukkat Shalom, Black Rock City, NV (Burning Man), Aug 2012.

“We Shall Do and We Shall Understand: Halakhah, Habitus and Embodied Theology in Judaism,” University of Chicago Theology Workshop (Apr 2012).

Respondent for Michael Fishbane’s presentation on “Ethics and Sacred Attunement” at a joint session with the University of Chicago Theology Workshop and the Jewish Studies and Hebrew Bible Workshop, University of Chicago (Mar 2012).

“Ancient Soil and Firm Sod: On Buber's Insistence that the ‘Land of Israel’ Literally Refers to the Land,” conference on Borders in Jewish Thought, University of Chicago (Feb 2012).

“Ancient Soil and Firm Sod: On Buber's Insistence that the ‘Land of Israel’ Literally Refers to the Land,” University of Chicago Center for Jewish Studies (CCJS) Graduate Working Group (Jan 2012).

“The Narrow Plank: Rosenzweig and Kierkegaard On the Possibility of Romantic Love,” Jewish Studies and Hebrew Bible Workshop, University of Chicago (Jan 2012).

“Spinoza’s Contradictory Approaches to Biblical Contradictions and Ambivalent Foray into Ancient Near Eastern Studies,” Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations Graduate Student Association Symposium, University of Toronto (Mar 2011).

## **ACADEMIC TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

**Visiting Assistant Professor of Religion and Jewish Studies**, Oberlin College, Spring 2018 – Present.

- Teach courses on Jewish thought, history, and culture.
- Advisor for honors theses on topics pertaining to Judaism in the Religion department and Jewish Studies program.
- Support Hebrew language instruction with additional practice and consultation.
- Faculty-in-residence at Johnson House.

**Teaching Assistant**, “Introduction to the Study of Religion” with Professor Sarah Hammerschlag, University of Chicago, Fall 2016.

- Required seminar for all incoming MA and MDiv students in the Divinity School, introducing them to foundational concepts and methods of academic religious studies.
- Led weekly discussion sections, held one-on-one meetings with students, and advised in paper writing.

**Teaching Assistant and Program Assistant**, University of Chicago’s “Civilization” program in Jerusalem, Spring 2015.

- Assisted Professors Michael Fishbane, David Satran, and Hakan Karateke with teaching responsibilities for this nine-week intensive course sequence on the history of Jerusalem from ancient through contemporary times.
- Guided group of twenty undergraduate students in matters pertaining to academic pursuits, group dynamics, life in Israel, and Hebrew translation.

**Teaching Assistant**, “Judaism and Philosophy of Religion in Contemporary Thought” with Professor Arnold Davidson, University of Chicago, Winter 2013.

- Led two weekly discussion sections for undergraduates.

## **FELLOWSHIPS, AWARDS, GRANTS**

**Shneer Fellowship in Post-Holocaust American Judaism**, University of Colorado Boulder, 2018-2019.

**Oden Post-doctoral Fellowship for Innovation in the Humanities**, Carleton College, 2018-2020 (declined).

**Luckens International Essay Prize in Jewish Thought and Culture**, University of Kentucky, 2018.

**Jacob Greenberg Dissertation Year Fellowship**, University of Chicago Center for Jewish Studies, 2017-2018.

**Graduate Council Travel Fund Award**, University of Chicago, Nov 2017.

**Leo Baeck Fellowship**, Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes, 2016-2017.

**Jacob Greenberg Dissertation Year Fellowship**, University of Chicago Center for Jewish Studies, 2016-2017 (declined).

**Knapp Family Foundation Graduate Student Travel Grant**, Association for Jewish Studies (AJS), Dec 2015.

**Norman Wait Harris Fund grant**, University of Chicago Center for International Studies, in support of my conference “Martin Buber: Philosopher of Dialogue,” Oct 2015.

**Franke Institute for the Humanities grant**, University of Chicago, in support of my conference “Martin Buber: Philosopher of Dialogue,” Oct 2015.

**Travel and Research Grant**, University of Chicago Center for Jewish Studies, 2014-2015.

**Award Recipient**, University of Chicago Center for Jewish Studies (CCJS) annual competition for teaching in the Graham School of Continuing Liberal and Professional Studies, Feb 2014.

**Theologian-in-Residence**, The Border Crossing Project, an initiative of the University of Chicago Divinity School, Fall 2012.

**Tikvah Fellowship**, University of Toronto Centre for Jewish Studies, 2010-2011.

**Shier Family Graduate Scholarship in Jewish Studies**, University of Toronto, 2010-2011.

**Shiff Family Graduate Student Endowment Fund Scholarship**, University of Toronto, 2010-2011.

**Legacy Heritage Fellow**, The Conservative Yeshiva, Jerusalem, Summer 2009.

**Magna Cum Laude**, Brown University, May 2007.

**Cohen Memorial Award**, Brown University Hillel Foundation, May 2007.

**Contemplative Studies Practice Grant**, Brown University, June 2006.

## **ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE**

**Managing Editor**, *Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* (Brill), Sept 2015 – June 2018.

- Assist the Editor-in-Chief, Elliot Wolfson, with editorial responsibilities.
- Coordinate the peer review process for submissions to the Journal.

**Leo Baeck Fellowship Programme**, *Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes*, Germany and England, Sept 2016 – Sept 2017.

- Presented and participated with other Fellows in two intensive seminars on German-Jewish history and culture from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. The seminars took place in Brighton, England, and Freudental, Germany, and also included notable guest scholars.

**Conference Organizer**, “Martin Buber: Philosopher of Dialogue,” University of Chicago, October 2015.

- Designed and coordinated this major academic conference with Paul Mendes-Flohr in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of Buber’s death.
- Raised \$20,000 from sources including the Chicago Center for Jewish Studies, the Franke Institute for the Humanities, the Martin Marty Center for the Study of Religion, the Norman Wait Harris Fund, and the University of Chicago Divinity School.
- Communicated with all conference participants and sponsors regarding logistical and programmatic matters throughout the year leading up to the conference.

**Student Coordinator**, University of Chicago Jewish Studies Workshop, 2012–2013.

- Selected students, professors, and other guest speakers to present their work on campus.
- Managed the annual budget for the workshop.
- Collaborated with professors and students from other workshops and departments to further integrate Jewish studies into the campus community.

**Certified Writing Intern**, University of Chicago, Spring 2013

- Completed “Pedagogies of Writing” course (HUMA 50000), which certifies doctoral students to work as Writing Interns in the University’s Humanities Common Core.

**“Border Crossing” Theologian-in-Residence**, University of Chicago Divinity School and Mishkan Chicago, Spring 2012.

- Selected and funded by the Divinity School to design and implement an educational series on “Revelation and Human Relationships” for Mishkan, a Chicago-based Jewish community.

**Teen Service-Learning Trip Leader**, Camp Tawonga and Yahel, Israel, Summer 2010.

- Educated teens about issues related to global justice, sustainability, Judaism and Israel.
- Facilitated service projects in collaboration with Israeli NGO’s.

**M.A. Representative**, *Centre for Jewish Studies Steering Committee*, University of Toronto, Fall 2010 – Spring 2011.

**Co-Founder and Co-Leader**, *Neshamah*, Toronto, Fall 2010 – Spring 2011

- Facilitated biweekly sessions that explored intersections between Jewish wisdom and mindfulness meditation.

**Jewish Student Life Coordinator**, Hillel at Stanford University, Aug 2008 – June 2010.

- Created and implemented educational and religious programs for university community.
- Led educational trips in Russia, Ukraine and Israel.
- Directed the Levison Fellowship and the Peer Network Engagement Internship.

**Facilitator**, *Encounter*, Jerusalem and Bethlehem, Spring 2008 and Summer 2009.

- Co-led programs to bring Jewish leaders to the West Bank to meet with Palestinian activists, politicians and community members.
- Facilitated small-group sessions throughout the programs in which participants could process and share their experiences.

**Writer Fellow**, Lisa Goldberg Memorial Writers’ Fellowship, American Jewish World Service (AJWS), Aug 2008 – Oct 2009.

- Wrote nine essays that explored intersections between the Bible and global justice, which were published for a readership of more than 5,000.
- Recorded my final pieces for the Dvar Tzedek podcast.

**Research Assistant**, Rabbi Yoel Kahn, PhD, Jerusalem, Spring 2008.

- Researched liturgical variance in medieval Jewish prayer books at the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts.
- Reported findings to Dr. Kahn for his book, *The Three Blessings: Boundaries, Censorship, and Identity in Jewish Liturgy* (Oxford University Press, 2010).

**LANGUAGES (in order of proficiency):** English, Hebrew, German, Yiddish, Aramaic, Spanish, French.